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노만,
잡고
잡을 테
데?!

류호성 지음
유나물 일러스트

“인사드립니다.
전자임 아가씨를 모시고 있는
메이드 로봇 XMR-Mk.XXI ‘유레카’입니다.
‘진지혜’라고 불러주신다면 더욱 감사하겠습니다.”

천재과학도&아빠실격 진자로, 그 일생일대의 꿈이 눈앞에?!
제4권 더 챔피언의 승부 당선작
공상과학 희코미디! 리스타트!

초회한정판 특전부록

캐릭터 스탠딩 POP
+외전&헌정 단편소책자 [Family Around]

초판한정 특별부록: 고급 일러스트 책갈피

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Illustrations



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유나물 일러스트

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검은 머리카락은 햇빛을 받아 금빛으로 빛나고

절실한 푸른 눈동자는 지나다니는 사람을 애처로운 눈빛으로 바라본다.

“아, 거기 학생분! 혹시 이정도 키에 머리에는 빨래집게를
꼭고 다니는 꼬마 아가씨를 보지 못하셨나요?”



Her black hair emitted a golden color as it received the sunlight and her earnest, blue pupils looked around woefully at the people who were passing by.

“Ah, Mr. Student over there! Have you perhaps seen a little lady that goes around with a clothespin in her hair?”

PM 06:00 각자의 일상

자칭 시간을 달리는 귀여운 딸 **진자임**

"그런데 거기, 일자 드라이버 아냐?"

자칭 이 시대의 천재 과학도 **진자로**

"그쪽의 3번 십자 드라이버 좀 줘."

타칭 미래의 월드클래스 트로트 스타 **신난다**

"음... 누구 자식인지 참 잘생겼단 말이지."

PM 06:00 Everyone's daily life

Self-proclaimed time-traveling cute daughter **Jin Jaim**

"Isn't that a flat-headed screwdriver?"

Self-proclaimed prodigy scientist of this era **Jin Jaro**

"Give me that number 3 Phillips screwdriver over there."

Renowned world-class trot star of the future **Shin Nanda**

"Mm... I don't know who you got it from, but you really are handsome."



자칭 시간관리국 시간관리요원 **하나봄**

"시달서 쓰기 싫다..."



자칭 메이드 로봇 XMR-MkXXI '유레카' 진지혜 **진지혜**

"사모님하고 같이 요리하는 것도 즐겁네요."

자세연 자칭 짜로의 신부☆

"와아... 그런데 감자는 야채예요?"

Self-proclaimed time agent of the General Time Affairs Bureau **Ha Nabom**”

“I don’t want to write this apology note...”

Self-proclaimed XMR-Mk.XXI maid robot ‘Eureka’ Jin Jihae **Jin Jihae**

“It’s fun cooking with the missus.”

Ja Saeyeon Self-proclaimed Jjaro’s wife ☆

“Wow... but are potatoes vegetables?”

“ 집에 가도 할 일은 아무 것도 없으니까요 ”

임무로 파견된, 내 억지로 돌아갈 기회도 잃어버린 이방인.

“ 그럼 들어가서 자임 양이나 지혜에 대해서 고민이나 하시죠.

아, 자세연 후배님에게 안부 전해주시고요.”

홀로 남아, 창문으로 들어오는 석양빛을 등으로 받으며,

나뭇 선배는 살며시, 손을 흔들었다.

“There’s nothing to do even if I were to go home.”

A foreigner who was dispatched here on a mission but had lost her chance to go home due to my stubbornness.

“Then you should go home and contemplate about Miss Jaim and Jihae.

Ah, give Underclassman Ja Saeyeon my regards as well.”

Being left by herself, and while receiving the sunset flowing through the window with her back, Upperclassman Nabom gently waved her hand.



류호성 지음
유나물 일러스트













We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 1

1. Change

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Midterms was now one week away.

The season of Spring grew deeper as it reached the end of April. Even the cherry blossoms which were once blooming beautifully were now littered throughout the streets like trash, and as time continued to pass, the weather went past being cool and was now a type of heat that wasn't exactly warm enough to be considered hot. In other words, these were optimal conditions to play outside.

And there's no way that the world would flow by so conveniently. Since even schools weren't excluded when it came to not wanting to see people have fun, it was around times like this that a concept like 'test the achievement of students at the middle of the semester' was made in order to torment students.

Well, since teachers would end class early during examination periods so that we could concentrate on studying more, I was grateful since that meant I had more free time. I had more time to focus on my research. Albeit, it feels like they're putting the cart before the horse since schools, which are teaching

facilities, are lowering their teaching time just so that we could study for the exams ourselves.

Regardless, different from me who was overflowing with free time, it was most likely a burdensome time for most other students. All the times they've spent dozing off or sleeping in class would come back to bite them during examination periods. And Saeyeon who was a model student at sleeping and messing around was…….

“Uu……. Uuuuu……!”

……Well, she was like this.

Late at night. Sitting across from me on the other side of the small table that I had set up in the center of my room, Saeyeon was frozen in place while holding a mechanical pencil and glaring at the question that I had given to her. Her face was barely 5cm away from the question itself.

In that posture, her long, straight hair, which had a flower pin in it, flowed down smoothly like silk and covered her slender neck and face which boasted large eyes and smooth lips. Due to the fact that she was lowering her upper body, her perfectly-sized breasts, which were hidden by her pajamas, changed in shape as they pressed against the table. As I thought, this was quite the image. But…….

“Uuuu……! Uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!”

Should I say that it was humorous in this state? Or should I say that it was pitiful?

No matter how I looked at it, I couldn't help but worry that steam would start emitting from her head because she was overloading too much. If it's Saeyeon, then it feels like it could actually start happening. Albeit I could instantly figure out how much she was thinking due to her serious eyes and serious groaning…….

“……You've been on that same question for 10 minutes already, you know?”

“Uu, uk…….”

Saeyeon must have taken my words as urging as the end of her mechanical

pencil twitched and moved, but it promptly stopped once more. I could only sigh.

Although I don't think there's a reason to abruptly say it now, Saeyeon's grades are bad. To be a bit more honest, they're really bad. If something like flunking was still around, then she would have probably been stuck in the same grade.

It was because of this that I was called to the teacher's office ever since elementary school due to Saeyeon's grades. Saeyeon isn't aware, but there's a reason why I was always in the same class as her every year. They were basically telling me to take responsibility.

".....Times up. Stop there."

That's why this much wasn't too much trouble. It was within my realm of prediction.

The instant I reached my hand out after confirming the second hand of the clock went past the arranged time, Saeyeon quickly raised her head and shouted.

"I-I can solve it if I have a little more time!"

"The fact that you had to think for 10 minutes in itself is already a problem."

That's a fundamental question, you know?

"Uu, uu..... B-But....."

"It's fine, give it here. Let's see....."

After taking the question sheet from Saeyeon's withdrawn hand, I fixed my glasses and confirmed the single question which she had been sincerely trying to solve. Calmly, while figuring out what part of the equation Saeyeon was weak at.

Then, although abrupt, I came to a realization once more.

".....Are you really a 2nd-year high schooler?"

That there was no point in finding what she was weak at.

"P-People can be a bit bad at studying!"

Although Saeyeon shouted confidently despite the fact that she was tearing up due to my pitying gaze…….

“No, this definitely isn’t at that level.”

I even felt sorrow while looking at the question sheet that was littered with red marks. It was to the point that I forgot about my fear of balding and started to scratch the back of my head.

I smacked my lips and since Saeyeon knew that this was something that I would do whenever I felt troubled, she drooped her shoulders.

“Is it, that bad……?”

I’m an honest person, so I answered her without hiding anything.

“Well, I don’t even know where to begin with teaching you.”

“Auu…….”

Nothing will change even if you groan cutely like that. Once I let out a small sigh, Saeyeon must have been dissatisfied as she puffed out her cheeks.

“B-But, I could have solved it if I had more time to think!”

“No, that’s absolutely impossible since you don’t even know the concept of factorization.”

“Uu, uk…….”

Saeyeon, who was shouting while doing her best to sound tough, sunk down once more. Although I felt a bit bad, why did this girl enter the natural science track? I should have stopped her when she said that she’d follow me to the natural science track. I should have sincerely tried to stop her.

“Uu……. This is embarrassing……. This is why I didn’t want to learn…….”

“So you do know that this is embarrassing. At least you have the smallest amount of self-awareness.”

“O-Oh right! I don’t have to go to university or get a job since I’ll be getting married to Jjaro and become a wife……. Ow!”

I take that back. Do you not even have any self-awareness? After flicking Saeyeon’s forehead since she still didn’t understand her situation, Saeyeon

rubbed her forehead.

“Uuu……. But studying, isn’t fun.”

Saeyeon continued to whine. It seems she really didn’t want to study as she was now pouting. Really, this girl.

How exactly was I supposed to prepare her for the midterms? There was only one week left. Would it have been better if I had started teaching her sooner? Was I being too optimistic when I thought that a decent amount could be achieved if we just crammed everything into a few couple of days?

“Mom, don’t worry! It’s all dad’s fault right now!”

“……Are you questioning my teaching method?”

Once I bared my teeth and turned around to glare at the voice behind me, Jaim had already hopped off of the bed and was glaring back at me while massaging Saeyeon’s back. This brat.

“This is the result of dad’s teaching method, isn’t it?”

An adorable face that looked like an adequate mix of Saeyeon and my facial features. I’m not saying that I’m adorable, so don’t misunderstand. I held up the question sheet with red marks all over it towards Jaim who had large eyes, soft cheeks which were perfect to pull on, and was grinning widely, resulting in her expression crumpling.

“Kid, can you still say that after seeing this?”

Jaim tactfully averted her gaze away from the worksheet and spoke. Quite the talent she has there.

“Am I wrong? To dad, taking care of mom was just your ‘job’, right? Despite that, isn’t it your responsibility for having allowed mom’s academic ability to stay like this?”

“Ack.”

That’s definitely a reasonable argument. This stung a little.

“……I, I must be bad even in Jaim’s eyes…….”

Although it seems Saeyeon became even more depressed by that.

“B-But, Saeyeon doesn’t learn no matter how many times I teach her! Even I’m capable of teaching this level of fundamental information properly!”

“Like I said, that just means you’re bad at teaching, dad. If you were teaching mom properly, then there’s no way that mom would still be clueless after how many times you’ve taught her.”

This brat had a strange amount of expectation towards Saeyeon. Do you not see that your comment just now made Saeyeon drop her shoulders even more? Jaim placed her hand against her forehead and shook her head.

“Really, if it’s going to be like this, then it would be better if I taught mom myself.”

“.....Hoh, all right then.”

It’s now time to teach this brat the horror that is Saeyeon.

“Go ahead and teach her.”

No matter how many expectations Jaim has towards Saeyeon, she’ll probably lower her tail once she experiences it herself. And when that happens, I’ll get her back twice as hard. However, Jaim puffed her chest out in response to my words and spoke confidently.

“If dad’s going to come to terms with his lack of ability that much and beg like this, then there’s nothing I can’t do! I’ll teach mom!”

How boldfaced. Well, her confidence is good and all, but I gave her the biggest smirk that I could muster and spoke slyly.

“Even if Saeyeon is bad at studying, how is an elementary schooler going to teach her?”

For starters, Saeyeon is also a high school student. I know that the brat is smarter than her peers, but teaching Saeyeon should be too much for her. More than anything else, even I have no clue as to how I’m supposed to teach her.

Ignoring my words, Jaim waved her hand as if telling me to get out of the way. Fine, I’ll move aside. Once I had moved over to the bed Jaim cleared her throat and looked at Saeyeon with a serious face.

“Ehem, mom. Therefore, I’ll be teaching you now. Being taught by your daughter might be embarrassing, but getting embarrassed won’t help with anything. If you follow my instructions well, then dad will definitely be unable to laugh at you.”

This already seems sketchy. Saeyeon nodded her head as if she had resolved herself.

“Okay then, let’s begin. I’m going to start with the basics, so you have to listen carefully, okay, mom?”

I spoke coldly towards Jaim who had spoken while brushing the worksheet away, placing a single book on the table, and spreading it open.

“If you intend to teach Saeyeon sex ed, then you better stop right now.”

“.....Tsk.”

Jaim clicked her tongue as she closed the home economics textbook. I let out a small sigh.

“Dad, shouldn’t you have feigned ignorance at first and shouted something like ‘Okay, that’s enough!’ later on?”

“I’m capable of learning, kid. You’re mistaken if you think that I’ll fall for your tricks forever.”

I could see through her thought process the instant she pulled out the home economics textbook anyway.

“That’s right, Jaim. Also, the upcoming midterm doesn’t cover home economics.”

Is that what you’re concerned about? Jaim turned her head away regrettably in response to Saeyeon’s soothing coaxing.

“.....But teaching things that are necessary for one’s daily life is true education.”

“Your mindset in itself is good.”

In any case, since we’re not messing around anymore, it seems it’s my turn now. After saying a single remark to the complaining Jaim, Saeyeon looked at

Jaim and smiled the instant I was about to stand up.

“Also, I already finished studying everything in that textbook.”

.....

“.....What?”

What did Saeyeon, say just now.....?

“Mom?”

In response to Jaim’s question which she had asked with wide eyes, Saeyeon giggled and rummaged through her backpack before proudly presenting her home economics textbook.

“Look, look! I’ve been studying hard by myself!”

She had opened the book to a section that had a post-it on which allowed it to be accessed with ease. In the section which she had opened, there were red lines and circles here and there with notes written almost entirely throughout the pages that had detailed reference images of both the male and female genitalia on them.

While gazing at me whose mouth was hanging agape, Saeyeon spoke as if she were proud of herself.

“I studied while going through a dictionary! That’s why, this is the sex that Jjaro was talking about before, right? The male and female take everything off and start with a kiss.....”

“W-What have you been studying!? Don’t look! I said to stop looking! Kya!”

H-How could a girl say such words!? Do you have no shame!? Blood rushed to my face and once I quickly snatched the book away from her, Saeyeon seemed upset as she pouted.

“I studied by myself because Jjaro wouldn’t teach me. I did good, right? Now you can’t make fun of me anymore, right, Jjaro?”

“That’s the wrong thing to brag about! Are you a boy going through his second year of middle school?! Why did you even underline a bunch of things with a red pencil?”

“But Jjaro would study by himself on the computer. I even looked through the videos you have on your computer, Jjaro.”

“Why did you look through them!?”

Wait, does that mean that too? Did she see that too?

“Wait a second, dad! Calm down! Life is something you should cherish!”

“Shut up! I’m going to die! My dignity has crashed, my face has crumbled, I can’t live in this sort of reality anymore!”

While struggling against Jaim who seemed to have forgotten that even if I were to jump out of the small window in my room, I would only end up in the hallway of the apartment complex, Saeyeon spoke while smiling contently.

“But I’m relieved. As I hoped, Jjaro prefers breasts like mi……. Ow!”

After hitting Saeyeon’s head in order to prevent her from saying anything more, I turned to face Jaim, which prompted her to shout in panic.

“W-Wait, dad! I-I didn’t know about this either!”

“Don’t make me laugh! Even if you didn’t instigate it, it’s because you kept making such obscene jokes that Saeyeon became like this!”

“Uu……. Jjaro definitely said that that’s how you make children…….”

“T-That’s right! Mom isn’t developing especially fast or anything! If anything, she’s on the slow side! Yeah! Mom, now that you’ve learned the basics, I’ll teach you about the more in-depth training methoubububububu!”

“As I expected, you’re the biggest problem here, you brat! If you try to teach Saeyeon weird things again, then I’m going to make you the training target.”

“B-But you won’t do the union thing that I kept ububububu!”

“No! Jjaro! It has to be me first……. Ow!”

“Let’s live with some more common sense, okay? More common sense!”

Really, what am I supposed to do with these two kids? I want to cry. Rather, I want to die. Why didn’t I delete them? Why did I think that it would be a waste if I were to delete them? No, it would have been a waste, but I would occasionally throw these sorts of stuff out whenever I went into sage mode. I

should have thrown them out. I should have deleted everything. I should have self-destructed.

While I was relieving my anger, which I had knowingly brought down upon myself, and leisurely pulling at Jaim's rice cake-like, pretty cheeks, Jaim's mouth seemed like they wanted to say something so I let her go.

"What is it? If you have an excuse, then I'll listen to it."

Jaim answered while rubbing her red cheeks.

"No, I was just curious as to why you suddenly wanted to look over mom's studying."

"Yeah. Jjaro, you always told me to study on my own until now."

"Eck."

This must have also been on Saeyeon's mind, as she stopped rubbing her forehead and turned to look at me with her large eyes. I turned away involuntarily.

"I-I just thought that it wouldn't be good if I left things like this!"

After I cooled down my burning face by shaking it, I turned towards Saeyeon and spoke.

"How long do you intend to stay at an elementary school education level? I won't say that studying is everything in life, but shouldn't you have at least the smallest bit of knowledge as a student? I kept telling you to study on your own, but this is how you ended up."

"Uu, uuh……."

Instead of retorting, Saeyeon became even more gloomy. Jaim was also looking at me with an accusatory gaze for some reason.

"N-No, I'm not saying that it's your fault……."

If anything, I was the bad guy if we had to point fingers.

In actuality, it was my responsibility for having left her like this despite having been given the role to take care of Saeyeon every now and then. It was late, but I had to take responsibility.

“In any case, follow my lessons properly. Now then, I’m going to start explaining the problem. So this part…….”

There was a knock on the door the instant I brought the problem sheet back out and was about to start explaining.

“How’s the studying going?”

“Ah, mom!”

Once Saeyeon saw her mom open the door and enter the room, she immediately smiled. She really does revive fast.

“I figured I’d check up on you guys while on my way back home from work.”

Saeyeon’s mom spoke while looking around at us.

If Saeyeon’s face gave off a cute feeling, then her mom was so refined that she didn’t resemble Saeyeon at all. Her short hair and suit really emphasized a business person-like atmosphere.

Saeyeon’s mom, who was grinning brightly, sat down between me and Saeyeon. I wasn’t certain as to whether she overlooked Jaim, who was glancing at me while rubbing her red cheeks, or she just wasn’t paying her any mind. This person was strangely hard to deal with.

“I had my hopes up in my own way, but you two really were studying hard, huh? Is it because Jaim is here? Should I take her with me?”

“…….”

Even more so because she acts like this. It seems she was enjoying my troubled expression as Saeyeon’s mom raised her chin above her clasped hands and spoke after chuckling.

“Well, jokes aside, are your studies going well? Albeit, I’m not worried since Jaro is with you.”

“You don’t have to keep worrying. As long as I’m in charge, I’ll definitely…….”

“Dad is bad at teaching, grandma!”

……This brat. Jaim, who had exclaimed that while grinning broadly, then shouted.

“I’m about to do the teaching because dad won’t do it!”

“J-Jaim!”

“Oh dear, was Jaim teaching mom?”

Once Jaim, who had been rubbing her cheeks, shouted that with an innocent and coy tone and expression which she only displayed to everyone except for me, both Saeyeon and Saeyeon’s mom opened their mouths at the same time. Saeyeon did so as if she were embarrassed, and Saeyeon’s mom did so as if she were proud.

“That’s not it, mom! I mean, I wasn’t being taught by Jaim, but…….”

“What is there to be embarrassed about? If you don’t know something, then you can learn from even your daughter. So, Jaim, what did you teach Saeyeon?”

Simply warmly, Saeyeon’s mom’s gaze looked as if she were saying that her granddaughter was admirable. However, Jaim’s gaze was……. Ah, it’s this pattern!

“I was about to teach mom about sex ed!”

With a trouble-free, bright grin and a shocking declaration.

“Good job, Jaim!”

“Why are you giving her a thumbs up?!”

Saeyeon’s mom pouted slightly due to my complaint and fidgeted. No, that’s not cute even if an old woman does that.

“But~ isn’t Jaro a bit weak when it comes to teaching Saeyeon about these sorts of things? True education is when you teach things that are necessary for real life☆! That’s more important than math equations!”



This woman, I mean, this person is really……. After chuckling at the sight of me grab my head as it was throbbing again, Saeyeon's mom stood up and spoke.

“In any case, it's good that you guys are studying hard, but you should continue after taking a break. I've peeled some fruits outside, so let's continue after eating them together.”

“Wow! You're the best, mom! Jjaro, let's take a break for a bit, okay?”

……Seriously, this girl revives way too fast. I shook my head towards Saeyeon whose eyes were now shining brightly.

“No. At this rate, there'll be a snag in our plan. Don't even think about taking a break until you finish this worksheet.

“I-If I rest and get something to eat, then I'll be able to concentrate more!”

This girl, she already has no intention to study……. Well, she didn't earlier either.

“Dad, grandma went out of her way to peel fruits for us, so let's continue after eating, okay?”

“That's right, Jaro. You're probably tired as well, so take a small break.”

“Jjaro…….”

I could only let out a sigh as they turned to look at me and spoke one by one.

“……Just 10 minutes.”

It's really troubling since I've become such a good person now.

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It has been 2 months since Jaim had arrived.

One month since the previous incident and a month had gone by since Saeyeon's parents had returned from their trip. During those two months, my life had changed quickly. Towards a direction that I didn't particularly want.

2 months ago, at the beginning of the semester, on the same night that Saeyeon's parents departed on their one month trip to Europe because it was their 10 year wedding anniversary, I had to sleep while holding Saeyeon's hand in order to calm her down since she was apparently too afraid to sleep by herself. Don't think of something weird, we really slept while only holding hands.

On the very next day, there was a child sleeping like a log between me and Saeyeon.

Even though we should have slept while only holding hands.

Jin Jaim. Saeyeon's and my daughter who had come from the future.

Although I want to attach 'self-addressed' in front of that, it doesn't seem like that's the case so it's even scarier.

Even though time travel is the result of something unrealistic, the thing she wanted was way too simple. Because Saeyeon and I got into an argument in the future, which resulted in Saeyeon leaving and forcing Jaim to grow up in a household without a mom, Jaim went back in time in order to carry out her 'Happy Family Planning', a plan in which she intended to improve my relationship with Saeyeon and, as a result, create a happy family.

Although her method of accomplishing this was to simply make me and Saeyeon unite at a young age and force us between a rock and a hard place.

Nevertheless, at that point, I already didn't like Saeyeon. I didn't. If anything, I hated her.

Because I hated families. Because I didn't need something like that.

Different to the me at that time, Saeyeon had a happy family.

Saeyeon's mother who loved Saeyeon ever so dearly but had passed away when she was still little. Even though Saeyeon should just be her second marriage partner's daughter, Saeyeon's mom still loved her as if she were her own actual daughter. And Saeyeon, who liked me and had received that love as she grew up innocently.

I disliked it all. I didn't need any of that. That's why I broke Saeyeon. I made her listen to only me and made her stay as a young child who didn't even know what the word 'love' meant on purpose.

After everything was revealed and as the result of the words 'I have never seen you as a woman.' being said, Jaim was infected with 'information contamination' which was a sickness that was derived from time traveling.

Jaim was placed in a situation where she suffered from the delusion that Saeyeon and I were knit together from a young age even though we didn't want to be, and that we had fought constantly, hated her for having created that relationship of ours, ignored her, and abused her. Jaim was going to return to the future in that state. I wanted things to end like that.

However, I couldn't leave my daughter who was hurt the same way as I was, who was going to be hurt like that because of me, by herself.

Well, for that reason, it has been approximately one month since I had negotiated with the dispatched time agent who was here to observe Jaim and take her back to the future if a problem were to occur, done whatever I could to somehow cure Jaim's information contamination, and, while I was at it, prepared documents so that Jaim could stay here.

And Saeyeon's parents then returned from their trip to Europe.

Honestly, it was mountain after mountain, I was even prepared for death.

But.....

“Jaim, say ah~.”

“Aaah~.”

“Oh, you’re so cute≡! Does it taste good?”

“Yeah! It’s great!”

“.....”

Even though one month had passed, I still had no idea what to say whenever I witnessed this. For starters, my head kept throbbing. My migraine has been getting worse lately.

Think about it.

You have an adorable daughter. You raised your kind, innocent, and angelic daughter with love and affection, and since a good opportunity had appeared, you suppressed your worry and left your daughter with your trustworthy neighbor in order to go on a one month trip overseas, a trip to Europe at that.

And then imagine being introduced to your granddaughter while your daughter has her arm linked with the boy next door the moment you come back home.

It would be a situation where it wouldn’t be strange to take the boy’s head and shout ‘I’ve slain the daughter thief!’.

But.

Saeyeon’s mom smiled warmly at the sight of Jaim filling her elastic cheeks with apples and chewing them happily.

“Really, Jaro and Saeyeon are quite capable. To have been able to create such a big and adorable daughter in just a month.”

.....I’ve been thinking lately, but this might be the effect of that memory manipulator or some other future technology. Even though I explained it to her last time.

“Like I said before, she isn’t our daughter but a half-sibling that one of my crazy parents had. The reason she calls Saeyeon and I her mom and dad is because I decided to raise her like a parent would since I didn’t want her to also

experience the same thing that I did with my parents.”

“Oh well.”

Is this an issue that can be resolved with just an ‘Oh well’?

Saeyeon’s mom answered coolly to my words that I had said with a sigh. Honestly, it might not be solely my fault that Saeyeon grew up to be this innocent.

Saeyeon’s mom smiled as she watched Saeyeon feed Jaim pears with her fork.

“In any case, it’s a relief that Jaro seems to also have feelings for Saeyeon. Honestly, this old lady was cheering for Saeyeon to get along well with the Jaro that she likes so much, but I also had my doubts.”

She’s still sharp when it comes to weird things like this. But,

“I told you that that isn’t the case. In the first place, I…….”

I froze and turned to the side the instant those words left my mouth, and as I expected, Saeyeon looked afraid while Jaim was looking at me as if she wouldn’t leave me alone if I weren’t careful with my words. Ehem, mm.

“……Well, it’s true that I said that I need Saeyeon…….”

“Yeah. That’s why I’m able to give my daughter away in marriage without any worry.”

“Really, mom…….”

“She didn’t come here to get married, you know? She’s just living with me, you know?”

“What else can that be but being sent to get married? Or should I refer to it as one of our traditional cultures, minmyeonuri?”

(TL note: Minmyeonuri – A girl who is brought up by the family of the husband-to-be)

“You’re the one who sent her arbitrarily! I was also fired because of that!”

Once I shouted in response to Saeyeon’s mom who was smiling happily, Saeyeon’s mom spoke as if she didn’t know what I was talking about.

“You even proposed to Saeyeon by saying that you needed her, Jaro. You

have a cute daughter as well, so a family should live together as a family, right? But you can't possibly consider the act of living with your family as a job, right? It's an obvious conclusion. Well, although we'll probably have to wait until the two of you are adults for the wedding ceremony."

"Like I said……."

"Or, what? Do you not want to live with Saeyeon, Jaro?"

I wasn't able to even finish my sentence.

Because Saeyeon's mom's smiling face changed into a cold one.

"Don't tell me you laid your hands on our Saeyeon and made a daughter like this with no intention of taking responsibility?"

"Uu, t-that's……."

While I was hesitating due to the pressure of the glint in her eyes, Saeyeon's mom spoke in a cold voice that was incomparable to before.

"Since I trust in Jaro who Saeyeon likes, I would like it if you didn't tell me that you had laid your hand on our Saeyeon without any thought and resolve……. So, Jaro?"

I will actually die if I give her the wrong answer.

"L-Like I said, it's too soon to live together, well it's……."

"Oh dear, is that what you meant? This old woman must have misunderstood."

That must have roughly been the right answer as Saeyeon's mom smiled brightly once more. That scared me to death…….

"But, as I thought, you have to live together from now on so that you can experience going through all the obstacles in life together, right? Moreover, there honestly isn't much of a difference, is there? We live right next to each other, and the two of you have eaten and slept together a lot of times. Ah, I guess it'll be a bit different now that you have a daughter."

"I like living together with mom and dad, grandma!"

"See? Jaim also approves."

Of course that brat would……. I was about to gnash my teeth, but I let out a sigh instead.

Yeah. It's been a month. It's been a month since Saeyeon and Jaim had started to flat out live in my house.

Saeyeon's parents, who acknowledged Jaim's existence much too easily, stated that families should naturally live together, so after concluding that Saeyeon will be living with me from now on, they actually sent her to my place after packing up some simple clothes.

Due to this, I'm on the brink of going bankrupt. Not only was half of my income cut, but the other half of my income decreased because my royalties wouldn't sell, and the total amount consumed within my household had increased due to the number of mouths I had to feed increasing by two.

"Now then, since I know that Saeyeon and Jaim are doing all right, I think I'll be heading home now. Saeyeon, Jaim, let's have a girls talk again next time as well. Then, I'll be off~."

While I was having those thoughts, Saeyeon's mom said her farewells to everyone except for me and disappeared through the front door. If someone else were here, then they might assume that she was going somewhere far away. Even though she only had to take five steps across the apartment hallway to reach her home.

In any case, our break is finished.

"Now then, it's time to study again. Let's go back to my room."

"I'm sleepy……."

"Don't make me laugh! You said that you'll be able to concentrate better if you eat something!"

"But……. It's already late in the night……."

With her eyes already half-closed, Saeyeon spoke while glancing at the clock hanging on the wall next to the dining table. It was currently 9:13 pm. Certainly, in Saeyeon's standards, this was late in the night since she would normally get ready to go to sleep at 9.

“As long as I’m in charge of your studying, I’m not going to do this half-heartedly or let you off easy! Now, go and wash your face!”

Even though I had purposely spoken in a loud voice and clapped my hands in order to wake her up, Saeyeon simply rubbed her eyes and looked at me pitifully. This girl, she keeps acting like a spoiled child.

“Dad, don’t be like that and let’s just continue tomorrow, okay? How about fixing Multi with me tonight? I’m not tired. You’d prefer that more as well, right?”

“No. You saw it as well, didn’t you? The fact that Saeyeon is in a dangerous state. I’m saying goodbye to Multi until the exam. If you have enough time to be concerned about that, then you should cooperate as well.”

“As I thought, you’re sincerely concerned about mom, dad……. Uub!”

After blocking the mouth that was speaking nonsense, I pulled Saeyeon up as she rubbed her eyes and dragged her and Jaim to my room.

There’s nothing that hasn’t changed. That’s fine. That’s an obvious fact. The issue is how I should feel about it.

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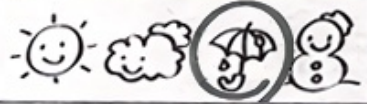
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20XX-April-3rd. Rainy Weather

Please circle
today's weather.



Mom and dad came home from their trip today. I was surprised because they arrived without telling me anything beforehand, but when they told me that they came back home quickly because they wanted to see me, I was happy. They also bought a lot of gifts!

Mom and dad asked who Jaim was, so when I told them what Jaim instructed me to say, that she was my daughter who was born after I properly united with Jjaro, both mom and dad dropped the coffee they were drinking. Now that I think about, didn't Jjaro say to not say that? That mom and dad would be shocked.

Mom said that since things have become like this, a family should live together as a family, so she and dad moved all of my stuff to Jjaro's house. Really, mom! I'm not sure why, but dad told me to be happy while crying. When I told him that I'll obviously be happy since I'm going to be living with Jjaro, dad cried more. I wonder why?

From now on, Jjaro's home is our home as well! I'm really happy since my dream is already starting to come true! I don't think I'll be able to sleep properly today.

TL note: Thanks for reading the chapter. It's nice coming back to Handholding after a while. I've been trying to fix my schedule a fair amount, but I'm still working on it. It's a fair bit better than when I was translating YaMA, but I'm not sure how long this will last. I may have to get a part-time job soon and if I do, that's going to hinder my schedule a lot more. Here's to hoping that I won't absolutely have to for the time being.

In any case, I don't think I have to say anything beforehand like I did with volume 1, but yeah. New character and a lot of character development. That's all I can say.

I'll see you guys in the next chapter.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 2

2. Intervention

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I will quote a famous person’s words with a slight modification.

——Midterms are over. I am free.

“You all did a good job on the midterms. Get some well-deserved rest over the weekend and I’ll see you all next week.”

Once our homeroom teacher finished giving his final words announcing the end of the midterms, our class, which had reached a critical point, erupted in an instant.

“Hey, the exams are over, let’s go to a PC room.”

“Let’s go to a karaoke room first. I want to scream.”

“We’re meeting in front of the station at 2pm, just as we promised, right?”

“Hey, did you hear that rumor? Yeah, that one.”

Mutter mutter. The classroom’s atmosphere instantly became rowdy. While my classmates were gathered here and there throughout the classroom sharing

with each other how joyful they were about the end of the exams and their exciting plans for Spring, I slammed my head on my desk, bang. Once I spoke with my mouth against my desk, the desk vibrated.

“Hey, Ja Saeyeon, are you alive?”

“.....Yup, I’m..... Alive......”

There was no strength in her voice. Well, this was expected.

The past week..... No, Since the exam period was squeezed in, it was about two weeks. Saeyeon, who was worn out due to the 1:1 mentoring sessions she had with me during that time, had been in this groggy state since yesterday.

“It’s now, over......”

And I’ve been groggy since the day before yesterday. Since I didn’t have the strength to lift my head up, I spoke while enduring the annoying vibration that resonated from my desk whenever I talked.

“This is why, next time, do some studying beforehand. Now you understand that trying to learn about everything that was covered during half a semester is nearly impossible, right?”

“Yeah..... It was hard......”

Well, we actually had to cover everything from middle school and not only half a semester, so my head felt like it was going to explode thanks to that. Because the teaching side needs to know a lot more than the learning side. Furthermore, she was like this for every single subject.

Regardless of whether I’m the greatest scientist of this era or not, that was only within the field of engineering, so even I had a hard time when it came to areas that were unrelated to engineering. I don’t know who this Jeong Cheol person is, but with my current feelings, I want to kill him. If you’re a high school student, then you most likely feel the same way.

(TL note: Jeong Cheol is a politician who was alive during the Joseon Dynasty. Most Korean high school students who are in their last year of high school know him for his famous work which is so complex and difficult to figure out that he has become notorious for it. There are people who even say that if they could go back in time, then they would go deal with him first.)

“Ah, but I think my grades went up a bit because Jjaro helped me.”

Nevertheless, it seems she had regained a bit of her strength as Saeyeon turned her head while still collapsed on top of her desk. I turned to look at her as well and did my best to grin.

“Of course. The great me was the one who taught you through both day and night.”

Nonetheless, teaching her was somewhat fruitful.

Well, once we went home and checked her results, her grades really did only go up by a small amount, but considering Saeyeon’s usual grades, this was a splendid achievement. On the other hand, my grades went down a bit, but I was already in the upper ranks. Is that surprising? Why do you think the school tolerates my behavior?

“And…….”

“Hm? Do you have something you want to say?”

I wonder if it was because she was tired, but her eyes were half-open. Her hesitation was apparent, but it seems she was able to muster enough courage as her once twitching lips were now moving.

“Until now, I avoided studying with you because I didn’t want to show you how bad I was at it, Jjaro…….”

No, I already knew this. Did you think I didn’t know? The instant I was about to tell her that, Saeyeon, who had strangely been avoiding my eyes, met my gaze and giggled.

“……Studying together, was more enjoyable than I thought it would be. I was happy, being able to study together with Jjaro.”

“……And I was only having a hard time trying to teach you.”

Her expression looked as if happiness itself was about to start oozing out from it. Her slightly red cheeks relaxed and the corners of her mouth went up, creating a rainbow-like curve. It was my turn to have a hard time trying to make eye contact with her, so I averted my gaze.

“Teach me next time as well, okay?”

“.....I’ll consider it.”

Albeit, if possible, I’m hoping that she’ll be able to do it by herself without my assistance.

My face also became red in spite of myself so I turned away.

“Oh, what’s this? Are you being shy, Jaro?”

“As I expected, you became a bit different ever since the two of you started living together~.”

“Isn’t it because they have a daughter?”

“But to have taught her all day and night..... Jaro is treacherous~.”

“.....Why are you all eavesdropping like it’s a completely natural thing to do, you untaught masses?”

Thanks to that, I met their gazes instead. Really, these uneducated people.

The group of three of mixed genders, who were looking this way and chatting with each other, grinned in response to my curt words and answered.

“What’s wrong? Don’t worry about us and continue.”

“Yeah, yeah. This is simply on the level of a local radio.”

“Go over there and do your local broadcast. Eavesdropping isn’t a good thing.”

“Eavesdropping? All we’re doing is naturally listening to our surroundings. Right?”

“We couldn’t hear properly because the class is too loud. Right?”

They’re trying to feign ignorance. The group moved ever so slightly to the side and started chatting with each other again as if they seriously intended to pretend as if they didn’t hear anything. Of course, while frequently stealing glances at us. So that’s how they’re going to play?

“Now that I think about it, Saeyeon. Taemin asked me to repair his laptop, but his hard drive got fried while I was fixing it. How do you think I should break the news to him?”

“Hey! How could you fry my hard drive?! Do you know how many MILF videos, which you can’t get anymore, were in there?!”

“Can’t hear us my ass! I’m really going to fry it now!”

Once I shouted back at Taemin who had immediately turned his head in order to yell at me, he realized he was tricked and panicked slightly. What an idiot.

“.....MILF? What do you mean by MILF?”

Furthermore, there was a girl right next to him. I do understand his feelings, but. Taemin, who was panicking while receiving Sooah’s cold gaze, gnashed his teeth.

“Jin Jaro..... I’ll get you for this.....”

“Pay me for the repair cost before that. I’ve been short on my living expenses lately.”

While I was retorting back at him with a smirk, Jiseon picked at my side.

“Rather, Jaro, how far did the two of you go?”

“Unit 3.”

“.....Really, your jokes.”

“You’re not that impressive either considering you’re a girl who just asked something like that so bluntly.”

What exactly is she asking me? Kids these days. However, I heard some groans and laughs in reaction to my answer. What?

“See. I told you nothing would happen.”

“But it’s been a month since they started living together, so I thought they would eventually.”

“As I expected, wouldn’t it be faster if Saeyeon jumped Jaro while he’s asleep?”

“In any case, one thousand won. Pay up. Now then, the side that voted ‘they won’t do anything’, come and receive your winnings!”

“You bastards, what do you think you’re betting on?!”

Also, nearly the entire class took part in it! In response to my shout, the rest of my classmates gave their own respective response.

“Jaro, the fact that nothing has happened even though you’ve been living together for a month is seriously bad. You went and did a shotgun wedding a short while ago, but what’s up with you nowadays?”

“Isn’t it because he got too used to it?”

“As I thought, that’s the biggest problem……. It definitely feels like Jaro can’t get it to stand. I wonder if he’s a eunuch or asexual?”

“Hey, Jaro, are you unable to get it to stand? Do you want me to lend you something good? There are actresses who look like Saeyeon in my collection.”

“All of you shut up!”

Seriously, these untaught masses……. Once I turned my head while gritting my teeth, I saw Saeyeon slightly covering her mouth as she laughed. How are you able to laugh in a situation like this?

“No, it feels like you’ve been getting along with the other kids lately, Jjaroo.”

“Saeyeon, does this look like getting along to you?”

“But Jjaroo, you remember our classmates’ names now, don’t you? Even though you didn’t remember anyone besides me and Nanda last year.”

……She’s good at noticing things like this. Only weird things, though.

“The not-able-to-stand Jin Jaro! You have a guest!”

“Can you please shut up?”

Once I shouted and turned to face whoever called out to me by the door, I saw Nanda waving at me with a grin on his face. Nanda entered our class with big strides and spoke.

“Yo, Jjaroo. Did you do well on your test? And how about you, Saeyeon?”

“Ah, Nanda, welcome!”

“Nanda, why exactly do you not hang out with your own classmates? You always play around in our class. Are you perhaps being bullied?”

We were in the same class last year, but even though we were in separate classes and also respectively separated by our liberal arts and natural science courses this year, he would always come to our class whenever he had the opportunity to do so. Considering his network of friends, there should be a lot of people who want to hang out with him. Nanda chuckled.

“That’s harsh, Jjarro. Just earlier, I came here after declining an invitation to hang out with some girls.”

I probably wasn’t seeing things when I noticed a couple of the guys click their tongues in response to Nanda’s words. He is cheesy, but this fairly handsome guy isn’t that unpopular. Although he usually refuses them himself. Or is it that? Am I in danger? Should I not pick up the soap for this guy?

“Don’t look at me like that. Hey, that’s rude. I’m merely saying that I’m not interested since I have a dream right now. Well, it would be different if there’s a girl who’s willing to understand my situation and wait for me.”

“Do you think such a convenient girl like that exists in the world? For a girl to love you sincerely even though you didn’t do anything, does that make sense?”

“.....”

“Ow! Ow! Why are you all throwing stuff at me all of a sudden?!”

“Shut up! You of all people shouldn’t be saying something like that!”

Nanda let out a big sigh at the sight of my classmates throwing a bunch of items and insults at me the instant I had spoken those words. What’s up with him now?

“In any case, Jjarro, Saeyeon, do you two have any plans now that the exams are over?”

In response to his question, which he had asked while looking at me and Saeyeon, Saeyeon and I looked at each other, nodded our heads, and answered.

“We’re going to sleep.”

“.....Was the exam period that hard on you two?”

Saeyeon answered Nanda’s question with a tired expression on her face.

“Because Jjaro didn’t let me sleep and kept making me study……. It was hard…….”

“I’m the one who had it rough. I had to start from the multiplication table again when I taught her math.”

“I wonder who made mathematics. Even though it isn’t helpful at all…….”

“……For Saeyeon to say such a normal line, it must have really been tough. I was going to ask if you guys wanted to go to a karaoke room since the exams were over…….”

“Karaoke room?”

Nanda nodded at Saeyeon who quickly turned her head.

“Yup. It must have been tough for the two of you since it was the exam period, but Jaim must have been bored as well since she had no one to play with, right? I thought we could all go to a karaoke room and relieve some stress. Ah, we could invite Upperclassman Nabom as well.”

“There’s no way you could relieve stress just by screaming in a karaoke room. We’d simply be using up the stamina which we already lack.”

More than anything else, it’s too tiresome. Saeyeon’s head snapped towards me the instant I said that.

“Jjaro……. Are you not going to the karaoke room……?”

“Yup. I’m not.”

In the first place, it’s a place I don’t like and it’s a playground for those untaught masses. If I had the energy to go there, then I’d rather fix Multi-chan at home and research more about robot maids.

“Really……. Are you really, not going to go……?”

Saeyeon looked as if she was really bummed out.

“If you want to go that much, then you can go.”

“……Mm, no. I’ll go home with you, Jaro.”

Without getting rid of her disappointed look, Saeyeon shook her head. Nanda furtively whispered into my ear.

“Hey, don’t be like that and just come with us. You know, don’t you? Saeyeon absolutely won’t go anywhere with another guy if you aren’t with her.”

……Yeah, that’s true. That’s why, even though there are a lot of guys who are interested in Saeyeon, none of them ask her to hang out.

Once I glanced at her slightly, Saeyeon was tossing glances at me while half-heartedly packing her backpack. Her gaze was filled to the brim with the desire to go play together. I honestly felt pressured.

“Don’t be like that and let’s go together, Dad. Let’s all go play together! Okay?”

“……Kid, when did you get here?”

Once I turned my head towards the voice and slight feeling of someone pulling at my sleeve, Jaim, who had appeared before I knew it, was grinning widely.

“Ah, Jaim, it’s good to see you!”

“Hi, Jaim! Seems like you’re getting along well with your dad today as well, huh?”

“Yup! Hi, big sis!”

I simply clicked my tongue at the sight of her hiding her true nature and innocently waving back at the others while beaming happily. Seriously, this kid, acting all innocent in front of other people…….

After the previous incident, this brat started to commute to our school.

Originally, I intended to at least enjoy my freedom at school by properly creating her family register and throwing her in an elementary school in order to make sure she properly received her compulsory education, but the custody officers must have eaten something bad as they submitted a note saying ‘This child requires affection. It would be best if she was with her guardian.’ so this became a special case.

Well, she doesn’t do anything when she comes to school, and normally, she either sits obediently in the corner of the classroom or goes to play with the old nurse in the school infirmary. Nevertheless, since a cute child has been

wandering around the school, a lot of people became interested in her and some of them even treat her like a mascot.

“More than that, Dad, the exams are over so let’s go play, okay? I’ve been bored since I’ve been playing by myself because of the exams. Look at how much Mom wants to go as well. Hm? Hm?”

“.....Your true intention?”

“Of course, it’s because I want to go to a karaoke room with Nanda Oppa!”

An immediate answer without any care for her surroundings. Well, it’s not like I was incapable of understanding.

Honestly, she barely has any credibility, but according to this kid, Nanda will become a global, top-star singer in the future. The kid was apparently his fan as well. Even now, her eyes were sparkling with the hope that she would be able to go to a karaoke room with Nanda.

“Haha, there aren’t a lot of people these days who like aspiring trot artists this much. Thanks, little lady.”

“Ehehe.”

That’s the reason why it feels like there’s no credibility. For trot to be booming in the future. Trends may be a thing that changes constantly, but isn’t that too ridiculous?

“Aren’t you popular, Nanda? How do you feel, Jaro? Are you not going to shout something like ‘So long as I live!’?”

“Rather, Jaim has quite the old preference……. To like trot…….”

While the untaught masses said things that bothered me, Jaim must have not been paying attention to them as she pulled at Saeyeon’s sleeve.

“Mom, you want to go to a karaoke room, too, right?”

“Of course……. Mm……. If it’s with Jjaro, I want to go a bit……. It’s been a really long time, since we last went to a karaoke room together…….”

Hesitantly, while peaking at me constantly, Saeyeon moved her mouth carefully. No matter how much you looked at her, she wanted to go a lot, but if

I said that I didn't want to go, then she wouldn't be able to go as well. Well, it seems like this was worrying her.

".....It can't be helped. We just have to go, right?"

That's why I let out a small sigh and answered as if I were mumbling.

"R-Really? You'll go, Jjaro?"

Seriously, you revive way too quickly, Saeyeon. While averting my gaze away from Saeyeon whose eyes were sparkling so much that I had no idea where her hesitation from earlier had disappeared off to, I continued.

"Well, if everyone wants to go, then we can sleep at home afterward. I also feel like I'll be able to sleep better if I discharge the rest of my remaining energy."

I'm not going because it's unavoidable or anything. It's sensible thinking. I'm not averting my gaze because I'm embarrassed. I merely wanted to look further away.

"But we're only going to be there for one hour. Once that hour is up, we'll immediately go——"

"I'm telling you that it was a real maid! I'm not lying!"

"——Maid?"

I definitely heard something incredibly concerning just now.

"Oh, as expected of Jjaro, you react to stuff like that."

Nanda chuckled once he saw me turn my head fiercely.

"Rather, if this rumor is going around in your class as well, then it might not be simply a rumor."

"What do you mean?"

"Hey! What were you guys talking about just now?"

While I was questioning Nanda who sounded as if he knew what was going on, Saeyeon stood up and shouted at the kids on the other side of the classroom. Gah, don't do that. Now it looks like you're asking for me since it seemed like I was interested.

“Hm? You’re interested in this as well, Saeyeon?”

“No, but Jjarro…….”

“I-I’m not interested at all! So, what were you guys talking about?”

Once I asked that amazingly naturally, in a tone that didn’t sound interested at all but also sounded a bit curious, our classmates looked at each for a moment before answering.

“It’s not something impressive, it’s only a rumor…….”

“No it isn’t, I actually saw her!”

“People have been saying that a girl wearing a maid uniform has been going around the neighborhood lately.”

“Not a uniform that you’d normally see in a manga, but a proper maid uniform with frills and all. Furthermore, they say that she’s really pretty.”

“Some people in my class have been saying that they saw her as well. Don’t you like these types of stories, Jjarro?”

And here I got excited. I snorted at Nanda’s words which he had said while poking at my side with his elbow before speaking.

“I’m not that enraptured by my dream to fall for such an incredible story. Things like that are simply delusions in the first place.”

“No, I seriously saw her!”

“Think about it logically. There’s no way that things like maids could exist in today’s society. If you perceive your delusions as reality, then you’re going to get thrown into a mental asylum. The only reasonable explanations would either be a maid cafe doing a grand opening event nearby or a store that sells those sort of things doing a cosplay event.”

Thinking about it now, there’s no way that the former would ever happen in a neighborhood like this, so there’s a higher possibility that it’s the latter. I suddenly felt sad about still being a minor.

“You have no passion.”

“No, if you consider his idea about a maid cafe, then he has a lot of passion.”

“But what’s a maid cafe?”

“In any case, Jjaro, your idea is lewd…….”

“‘Sells those sort of things’, I never saw you like that…….”

“Shut up! The great me has yet to succeed at creating a robot maid, so there’s no way that a maid would already be wandering around the streets!”

“……Ah, sure.”

……That last reaction hit me the hardest. The feeling that the gap between me and my classmates, which had become smaller as of late, growing apart once more must just be my imagination. Although seeing as how they’re taking a step back, the physical gap between us is growing bigger.

However, something felt out of place because the kid was keeping her mouth shut. Was she pretending? There’s no way that she would forget about teasing me in a situation like this.

“Ah, now that I think about it, Jaim, is she your acquaintance?”

“Hm? What are you saying all of a sudden?”

Once I asked that to the boy who inquired that of Jaim as if he had remembered something a second ago, the delusional guy who claimed to have personally seen the maid answered.

“No, it’s just that, now that I think about it, that maid said that she was looking for a little girl with a clothespin in her hair…….”

“……Oi, kid.”

“Ack…….”

Jaim quickly looked away in response. When I leaned in close to read her expression, Jaim squirmed and did her best to hide her face by moving her body.

“……Kid, what did you do now?”

“W-What are you saying, Dad? I-I don’t know anything.”

Even though I forcefully held her head in place and stared at her, Jaim tactfully moved only her eyes and avoided my gaze. Despite that, I could still

see the edge of her eyes and the corner of her mouth twitch. While pulling at the smooth cheeks which were trying to whistle, I forcefully made her meet my gaze.

“If you tell me now, then I’ll forgive you.”

“I-I really don’t know. I didn’t do anything.”

“……Really?”

“R-Really. S-Seriously, it’s true.”

This brat, making a pun with our names.

Hesitantly, she watched for my reaction and averted her gaze whenever she knew that I was still looking at her. Her mouth squirmed as if it were debating whether to let out an excuse or not. The fact that she wasn’t reacting even though I was pulling on her cheeks, and the fact that she was speaking formally to me, all of these things were honestly suspicious……. It definitely feels like something is up, but…….”

“……I-I mean…….”

“All right. I’ll trust you this time.”

“Dad?”

But well, all things considered, there’s no way that this girl could know a maid outfit-wearing person whose sanity is questionable. There are no reasons for that side to know about Jaim and take interest in her either.

More than that, for a maid to exist in today’s society, I’d like to see one at least once. Even if it’s a delusion. It’s honestly a bit regrettable.

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“All right, let’s go, then.”

“.....You’re being surprisingly docile.”

Nanda went to go get his bag and I told Saeyeon and Jaim to wait for us by the school gate while I went to go invite Upperclassman Nabom since I was the closest person to her, but I didn’t expect her to agree so readily. I expected her to decline the invitation, so I had come here simply out of courtesy.

Upperclassman Nabom smiled gently at my words with her constantly sleepy-looking gaze, the lacrimal point of which being one of her distinct characteristics.

Ha Nabom. The one and only other member of the ‘Creative Science Club’.

“Did I not tell you before that I have a lot of interest in the culture and products of the past? I want to go to all sorts of places, but Underclassman Jin Jaro has yet to take me anywhere, so I can only be grateful towards an opportunity like this.”

And she was also an expat agent who had traveled here from the future in order to keep an eye on Jaim.

“Furthermore, I had no plans for after the midterms. But for Underclassman Jin Jaro to have come to me first and suggest something. Does this mean that you finally wish to reveal the DLC content which I had mentioned previously? Could this be an affair?”

“There’s no reason for Dad to go to a karaoke room with a weird woman, right?”

Thank you for the quick retort. Before I could give any sort of remark, Jaim, who seemed to have caught wind of my conversation with Upperclassman

Nabom, had appeared before I knew it and was looking askance at Upperclassman Nabom while holding my arm.

“Oh dear, are you jealous, child? Are you trembling simply at the thought of this big sis going out to play with your dad?”

“Shut up, you old hag! Stop trying to flirt with my dad!”

As I thought, the two of them didn't get along. Well, it couldn't be helped. It was because of Upperclassman Nabom's plan that Jaim was nearly sent back to the future last time. Before I knew it, Saeyeon slipped between Nabom who was retorting leisurely and the growling Jaim and spoke after linking her arm with mine.

“Big Sis Nabom, if it's fine with you, then you can go to a karaoke room with me whenever you want!”

“I see. There was also that method. Then I'll contact you when the next opportunity presents itself.”

“Okay!”

Saeyeon smiled brightly. Personally, it felt a bit weird since I would say 'I'll contact you later' whenever I had trouble flat-out rejecting someone.

In any case, we walked together with that mood lingering over us.

Our school was in the center of an apartment complex. If you walk for about 5 minutes from the school, then a large road with another building complex surrounding it would appear. And there was a shopping district on that street. Well, it wasn't anything impressive as it was just a normal neighborhood shopping street.

“.....As I expected, it's already bustling.”

Of course, it wasn't only one or two people who rushed out of school the instant the exams were over.

Since it was a Friday afternoon, normally it wouldn't be busy, but due to the fact that the exams ended today, there were a bunch of groups faithfully playing around due to their feeling of freedom.

“So where do we have to go to see that maid?”

“Is there really a maid? You sure it wasn’t a lie?”

That rumor really did spread a lot. Usually, simply mentioning the word ‘maid’ would earn you sad responses like ‘So that’s what you’re interested in…….’, but even fellows who looked like they had absolutely no connection with that sort of stuff were going past us talking about it. Did that sort of store really open up nearby? If I find it, should I secretly go there using my old eye?

“Still, it’s a relief that there’s an empty room. I thought that we would have to ride the bus and go to another neighborhood.”

I was brought out of my thoughts by Saeyeon’s words. More importantly, you really did want to go to a karaoke room, huh? You were even planning to ride a bus to another neighborhood.

Well, it was thanks to Nanda that we were able to get a room.

While we were searching for an empty place since the karaoke rooms on the side of the street were all occupied by the students who had entered since the exam period was over, Nanda told us that there was a place he knew and dragged us to an alley.

It was a dark karaoke room that had a slightly shabby atmosphere. The machine was by the entrance of the room, and a sofa in the shape of half a square was lined up on the back wall with a table in the center. This was quite the standard room. Shabby.

“Upperclassman Nabom, now that I think about it, did you say that it was your first time going to a karaoke room?”

Once I turned to ask that of Upperclassman Nabom just in case I had to explain things to her, Upperclassman Nabom lightly shook her head.

“I remember coming to one when I was little. I’m not accustomed to it.”

“No, you can shake that once the music starts.”

Seeing as to how she was shaking the tambourine with sleepy but intrigued eyes, she must be excited. That makes her look cute. The fact that her current behavior strangely didn’t fit her normal appearance.

“Jjaro, what should I sing? Hm?”

“Choose something yourself. And if possible, not a children’s song.”

“In times like this, you should have just chosen a duet song to sing together, Dad.”

Jaim was the one who replied to my words which I had said to Saeyeon as she brought her body close to me and held the song number book out to me. Do I look like that sort of person, brat? Right when I was about to scold her, the door opened.

“Sorry if this place looks a bit shabby. I use this place often as a substitute for a practice room, so I thought that I could get us a spot if I talked with the owner. Albeit, this is a small place in an alley so there are no other customers right now anyway.”

Nanda entered the room holding some drinks in his arms while grinning. The fact that Nanda bought only sports drinks and water since Saeyeon couldn’t handle the sensation of carbonated drinks showed how much of a good person he was, but…….

“It’s all good, but can you move over?”

Once I said that to Nanda who sat down between Saeyeon and Jaim, Nanda shrugged. It’d be troublesome even if Saeyeon sat in between.

“Ei, don’t be like that, Jjaro. We were able to find this place thanks to me, right? The other karaoke rooms are filled with customers.”

“No, that’s not what I…….”

“That’s right, Dad! We were able to get a room thanks to Nanda Oppa! Thank you very much, Nanda Oppa. We wouldn’t have found this place if it weren’t for you.”

“I’m talking about Nanda’s sense of fashion!”

“Hm? What about my outfit?”

“Go to the bathroom right this instant and look in a mirror. If you still don’t understand, then go outside and ask anyone on the street. If none of them run away, that is.”

I may also live however I please, but you’re going too far, you know?

Nanda blinked a couple of times before looking down at his outfit and speaking.

“Is it that weird? What’s so bad about this?”



His hair was all combed back and he was wearing large dark sunglasses that had stopped trending a very long time ago over his eyes. They weren't black sunglasses. Those were 'dark sunglasses'. If you want to know how they're different, then refer to a 7080 picture. He was wearing his school uniform underneath, but he had taken his blazer off and was wearing the same embarrassing, sparkling night outfit which we saw last time. Well, just this much was extremely embarrassing, but.....

(TL note: A 'dark sunglass' looks something like this)

"Who goes around holding a stereo on their shoulder in this modern day?"

Is this Harlem? Are you going to Harlem? Not harem, this is different from a harem. Harlem is a place where those cool black bros go around with those sort of sunglasses and cassette players, in other words, boomboxes. Now that I mention it, this really does seem like Harlem.

Instead of pulling out a pistol from his pocket, Nanda took out a comb and combed his hair which was already embarrassingly combed back even further and spoke.

"No, should I say that it doesn't feel right to play trot on an mp3 player, or should I say that analog suits it more? It's just that sort of pride?"

Why was that a question at the end? Do you not see that even the kind Saeyeon has a troubled smile on her face?

I reached my hand out and messed up his hair, returning it back to normal.

"I thought I'd put some effort into this since we were all going to a karaoke room together."

"I can confidently declare that your method of 'putting in some effort' is extremely wrong."

"It's okay, Nanda Oppa! It really looks good on you! Dad just doesn't understand because he has no sense of fashion!"

And you need to get glasses, brat. Instead of telling her that, I simply let out a sigh.

"Jjaro really does lack any fashion sense. He always has that toolbelt on."

“I don’t want to hear that from you.”

The toolbelt is much more rational! Well, relatively.

“There’s also a reason why I brought this.”

Nanda spoke while placing his audio system on top of the table.

“This fellow is going to handle my accompaniment.”

“Did you bring your own music?”

“As someone who dreams to become a professional trot singer, no matter how impressive Sunhyeon’s songs are, I can’t just sing them.”

He at least has the mindset of a professional. Once Nanda clapped his hands in order to gain everyone’s attention, Saeyeon and Upperclassman Nabom lifted their gazes from the number book.

“Ehem, I apologize for doing this before anyone could put in any songs, but I would like to sing first. Would that be fine? We can’t pause once we start putting in songs after all.”

“That’s all right. It’ll take some time to find some songs anyway.”

“It’s fine, Nanda. It’s been a long time since we last heard you sing, so I want to hear it again.”

“Aaah……. To be able to listen to Nanda Oppa’s singing, up close…….”

It seems Nanda believed that he had received everyone’s approval as he grinned and nodded. Hey, wait. I didn’t give you my okay. I also have songs I want to sing. Are you going to ignore me coolly? Hey, you.

Well, seeing the little kid’s eyes sparkle so brightly made it hard to say this out loud so I only muttered it to myself in my head. I’ve become way too kind lately.

Ah, now that I think about it.

I turned towards Upperclassman Nabom who was still shaking the tambourine and spoke.

“Thinking about it now, if trot is a big trend in the future, then are you also Nanda’s fan, Upperclassman Nabom?”

If he had a rough total of one billion fans around the world, then there was the possibility that she was one of them. However, this girl doesn't really display such interests openly. Once I asked her that in a quiet voice so that Saeyeon, who was sitting beside her, couldn't hear me, my breath must have tickled Upperclassman Nabom as she shivered slightly before speaking while raising a brow. Thanks to that, her chest shook much more than it did while she was shaking the tambourine. As expected of the trigger systems of universal gravitation. I wonder if it's because I'm close to her, but she has a nice scent.

"What are you saying, Underclassman Jin Jaro? Trot is something which only little girls or enthusiasts enjoy. A mature female such as myself prefers to listen to a more aged and dignified melody such as idol music."

".....Huh, okay."

The future is truly a mysterious place. Trends do come and go, but in any case, Nanda tapped the mic as if he wanted our attention before striking an elegant pose and speaking.

"Everyone, from this point forth, I hope that you all enjoy my, Shin Nanda's, singing."

"Wow! You're amazing, Nanda Oppa!"

I see. Is it going to be that kind of atmosphere? I was able to understand thanks to the example which this little girl-cum-super enthusiast was displaying. Nanda spoke happily as he saw Jaim and Saeyeon give him an applause.

"Now then, real man Shin Nanda shall now sing with all his heart."

Seriously, he likes to exaggerate things. Without forgetting to grin at the excited Jaim and Saeyeon, and also Upperclassman Nabom who was sitting beside them with her arms folded, Nanda pressed the play button.

At that moment, Upperclassman Nabom poked my side so I turned to look at her.



“But Underclassman Jin Jaro, from what you’ve heard, Underclassman Jin Jaro, what do you think about Underclassman Shin Nanda’s singing ability?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, whether Underclassman Shin Nanda will truly become a top star in the future, as his friend, Underclassman Jin Jaro, what do you think about this? There’s no evidence either.”

Of course, it probably would be hard to believe that a famous star is so close to me. Despite that, I don’t believe that there could be multiple singers who have that name, but if she wanted my opinion.

“Who knows? I’m not sure if it’s enough to be a top star in the future, but…….”

I was interrupted as Nanda began singing.

Moreover, once you heard this, anyone would understand what I was about to say.

——Well, this fellow’s singing ability was definitely the best.

“Yoouu~ don’t knooooow~!”

Although the slightly vigorous accompaniment and the strong, snapping singing method unique to trot were a bit unsettling, his talent that allowed him to sing powerfully and his ability to put all of his emotions into his singing were contained within them.

Occasionally merrily, occasionally piteously, and occasionally passionately, he was letting out every last emotion he had with only this one song. Even I found myself drawn into his singing by the time I had come to my senses back when I went to a karaoke room with him a long time ago even though I had mocked him at first.

I shook my head and forcefully took myself out from being drawn into his singing again. I know that it’s not polite to look somewhere else when the person with the microphone is singing so diligently, but I was curious as to how the brat was reacting.

“Kyaa! Nanda Oppa! Kya kya! Take me! Nanda Oppaaaa!”

……Wow, I was expecting this, but this is a bit too much.

Sitting next to Saeyeon, who was clapping along with the rhythm and smiling as if she were in awe, Jaim, who was at her zenith of being moved, was cheering while waving both of her arms and bobbing her head. Hey, this is trot, you know?

She opened her sparkling eyes wide as if she didn’t want to miss even a single moment. The corners of her mouth nearly reached her ears. Has this girl ever smiled this brightly before? As she moved her arms back and forth along with her head, her hair that was being held by her clothespin bobbed around. Should I say that this was truly the peak of her happiness? She looked as if she were in Heaven.

After chuckling at the fan who was meeting the big star she looked up to and the guy who was meeting his number one fan who acknowledged him, I turned towards Upperclassman Nabom and spoke.

“So, what do you think…….”

However, in that instant, I was at a lost for words due to the unbelievable sight before me.

“…….”

Upperclassman Nabom. Was in awe……?

As if she couldn’t believe what she was hearing, Upperclassman Nabom was opening her normally sleepy, half-closed eyes wide. The corners of her eyes were trembling along with her pupils and her trembling mouth gradually opened.

“……hk.”

S-She’s crying? Upperclassman Nabom was in so much awe that she was crying?

Teardrops started to fall one drop at a time from the shaking corners of her eyes. Those weren’t tears of sadness. Eh, how should I say it? Should I say that they were sincerely moved tears……?

“——…….”

No sound came out from her opened mouth and, as if to block whatever sound could squeeze itself out, Upperclassman Nabom covered her mouth with both of her hands. Her shaking shoulders were most likely the result of her soundless awe.

“Uhm, Upperclassman Nabom?”

“Ah, hk, ah, it’s nothing……. Absolutely, it’s absolutely, uhk, not…….”

Upperclassman Nabom responded while shaking her head, but her gaze was still stuck on the singing Nanda.

“I-I’m absolutely, not moved……. By the fact that, I’m hearing, Shin Nanda Oppa’s singing, here, like this, so up close……. Hk, I-I’m not moved, to tears! Really!”

“……Uh, well, okay, I understand.”

More importantly, are you going to be like this as well?

At any rate, for Upperclassman Nabom to have hidden this sort of girlish side to her. It’s a bit surprising. The fact that this didn’t suit her normal persona made it a bit cute.

Nanda’s song came to an end while I was lost in my thoughts and we then officially turned on the karaoke machine. In other words, it meant that someone had started a song.

“Oh? Saeyeon, do you even know these kinds of songs?”

Once I asked Saeyeon that after I heard the melody of a popular song and noticed that she was the one standing up with the microphone in her hand, Saeyeon must have taken offense to that as she spoke while pouting.

“What? I don’t always sing children songs, hmph. I even know the songs of trending artists, hmph. I’m not always a kid, hmph.”

If she didn’t add those ‘hmphs’ three times, then she really wouldn’t seem like one. While this was happening, Upperclassman Nabom had also grabbed the mic and stood up. She’s fast at recovering as well. She’s behaving normally now.

“If it’s Miss Mary’s song, then even I know it. Can I sing this with you?”

“As a duet? Okay! Ehehe.”

This was a duo that was rather hard to see. Saeyeon and Upperclassman Nabom went forward to the slightly open area in front of the karaoke machine and started singing the idol song together. Saeyeon sang like an innocent artist while moving her body passionately and Upperclassman Nabom got so into the song that she started to show off her dance moves. I wonder if she was being swept up in the moment? She normally wouldn’t be like this. Although it was nice seeing certain things shake a lot.

Once the song, which was both pleasing to the eyes and ears, of the two beautiful girls was over, the intro for the next song started.

“Huh? Who’s song is this?”

“It’s a foreign song. The only person here who would sing this would be…….”

“That’s right. It’s me!”

I grabbed the microphone while striking a pose that shouted ‘YES! I AM!’ and stood up.

“All of your music is bland! Music is all about hard rock! Death metal! What’s the point of coming to a karaoke room if you aren’t going to shout!”

“No, but you definitely said that you didn’t want to come here, Dad…….”

“I don’t care. Listen to my song!”

I didn’t particularly want to come here, but since I was already here, I might as well put my all into singing! My favorite song, People=SHIT!

“……Dad, you’re loud.”

“This is hurting my ears, can you please stop?”

“More than that, the degree of how tone-deaf he is is rather severe.”

“J-Jjaro, do your best!”

……This is why you have to go to karaoke rooms with people who understand you.

While I was being depressed in the corner due to the harsh score and severe evaluations, the karaoke machine started to play an innocent and lively rhythm that was different to the previous song.

“Oh, are you going to sing a children’s song, little lady? That’s cute.”

“Ehehe.”

Jaim smiled brightly in response to Nanda’s words before she started to sway her body according to the rhythm while holding the microphone in both of her hands. For her to sing a children’s song even though it doesn’t suit her. Of course, there’s probably no way that the songs this girl knows could exist in today’s karaoke rooms. Regardless, this song again? Saeyeon likes this one as well.

Jaim started to sing according to the lively rhythm.

“Three bears in a house~ Daddy bear~ Mommy bear~ Baby bear~.”

While doing her utmost to act in a cute way that didn’t fit her normal attitude, Jaim continued to sing. She’s a bit cute when she’s like this. I grinned.

“Daddy bear is bald~.”

“You trying to start a fight, you brat?!”

I grabbed the other microphone and shouted with all I had.

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“My throat hurts~.”

“At most, all you sang were children’s songs and trot music.”

The stretching Jaim glared at me when I pointed that out. What do you want? I’m the one whose throat is sore for shouting so much.

“That was more enjoyable than I expected it would be. It would be great if we had the opportunity to do this next time as well.”

“Along with Nanda, right?”

“Underclassman Jin Jaro, please forget what you saw earlier. I absolutely did not do that due to Shin Nanda Opp-, Underclassman Shin Nanda’s singing…….”

“I didn’t know that Big Sis Nabom was so good at singing. Let’s go to a karaoke room together next time! Just the two of us! Please teach me a little!”

“It was nice that the owner gave us a lot of bonus time since it seems everyone was able to sing as much as they wanted to.”

He definitely gave us a lot. He gave us a bonus of 2 hours even though we only asked for one hour. Is that karaoke room okay financially?

“So Saeyeon, were you able to relieve some stress?”

In response to my question which I had asked like a passing remark, Saeyeon smiled brightly.

“Yup! I’m happy that I was able to sing with Jjaro!”

“No, you didn’t sing with me, you know?”

Don’t try to fabricate something so casually. My affection points for you didn’t go up that much.

“In any case, now that that’s over, we can go home and sleep, right?”

Saeyeon and Jaim immediately turned to look at me.

“Jaro, do you want to go home right away even though we’re already outside?”

“Dad, don’t be like that and play some more with us, okay? The exams are over.”

“I’ve played along with you guys long enough, haven’t I? Let me go home and get some rest.”

At school, Saeyeon said that she was going to go home and sleep as well, but why was she so energetic now? I’m starting to reach my limit. While I let out a yawn and supplied oxygen to my brain, I noticed something in the corner of my vision.

“.....Hm?”

I took my glasses off. I wiped the lenses with my shirt. Since they were already off, I decided to also massage the bridge of my nose. I put my glasses back on and looked once more. I did this because no matter how many times I looked, it didn’t seem like I was seeing things.

“Excuse me. Can you spare a moment of your time?”

On the other side of the street, someone was at the intersection and trying to call out to the people passing by with a frequently-heard line. The person was doing their best to find someone who would listen to them between all of the people who were casually ignoring them.

“I’m sorry. Please spare me some of your time.”

“Hey, Jaro, that person.....”

“.....No, our eyes are probably playing tricks on us.”

Although that felt sad in its own way.

“I’m not a suspicious person. Please, listen.....”

Was she about Saeyeon’s height? It felt like she was the same age as well. If she came up to me, then her head would probably reach my eyes. Her black

hair was receiving the sunlight and emitting a golden tint while her earnest blue pupils looked at the people passing by pitifully.

“.....Ah.”

The brat kept squirming. You really do know something, don't you? But I'll interrogate her later. Right now, I..... Ah, damn it, it'd be a waste.

But, she was a real maid. It felt insane, but she was real.

A traditional maid uniform with frills that had a black and white, cookie and cream color scheme. Her short skirt, garter belt, and the headband were a perfect representation of my preference. Across the street, there existed a girl who was wearing an outfit that was in the wrong era, no, the wrong dimension. An existence that was a summation of my fantasy. No, my dream is robot maids. Not just a maid. The two are similar, but they're different.

While I was thinking about nonsensical things due to my shock and panic, I heard a clear voice in my ear.

“Ah, the students over there! Have you perhaps seen a little girl who's this tall and has a clothespin in her hair?”

.....Don't turn towards us and ask that. Albeit, I don't know who you are.

I grabbed the kid and turned us around so I couldn't see the maid, but the sound of footsteps was telling me that she was approaching us. I quickly took the clothespin off of Jaim's hair. Thanks to that, her front hair came down. I furtively turned towards both Nanda and Upperclassman Nabom before raising my index finger to my mouth. Someone who doesn't know what this mean probably doesn't exist.

“Ah, yes! We have!”

“......”

I didn't expect anything out of Saeyeon in the first place, but isn't this going too far?

“Really?! Where did you see her?”

Jaim pulled at Saeyeon's sleeve slightly. She was shaking her head fiercely. Even Saeyeon should be able to understand this.

“She’s right here. But did something happen?”

“M-Mom! I told you to not say it!”

“But she was searching so diligently. Mom told me that I have to help people who are in trouble!”

Even if you say that so gallantly…….

Before I knew it, the weird girl had come up next to the panicking Jaim and Saeyeon who was tilting her head as if she didn’t know what the problem was. Now that she was standing in front of us, she really was wearing a maid uniform. I see that the world is vast and filled with girls with flowers in their heads. Although this girl doesn’t have any flowers.

“Here……? Ah, do you mean……?”

“There’s nothing to see here. Yeah. I don’t know who you are and I don’t know about any kid with a clothespin in her hair, but this child absolutely isn’t…….”

However, before I could even make something up, the weird girl had already grabbed Jaim by the shoulders. Jaim squirmed and shrunk back.

I don’t know what was going on, but this wasn’t good. Before being wrapped up in something troubling, the kid disliked what was happening this much. I don’t know who this strange girl was in the first place. For starters, since I got rid of the evidence, I’ll interrogate the kid when we get home.

“Excuse me, I don’t know who you are, but…….”

“Are you perhaps, Miss Jin Jaim……?”

“……**Miss?**”

I ended up inadvertently turning to look down at Jaim because of those words. No, the title she was giving her bothered me as well, but more importantly, how did she know the brat’s name?

The maid girl was staring at Jaim’s face next to me. Her blue pupils that were as clear as camera lenses were filled with only Jaim’s face. Her eyelashes were long. In any case, why does her face, seem a bit familiar……?

“Who exa…….”

“I was finally able to find you, Miss Jin Jaim!”

However, before I could even finish my sentence, the girl in the maid uniform pulled Jaim into a hug and shouted.

“……Jin Jaim.”

“……Miss?”

There’s no way that I could have misheard that loud voice. Saeyeon was looking at the maid with an utterly clueless expression on her face and Nanda’s eyes were wide open. I shouldn’t have to even mention my reaction. While I was at a loss for words due to the title she had given to Jaim and the fact that she knew Jaim’s exact name, the maid gave Jaim a powerful hug with a tearful look on her face as if she had just discovered the person she had been anxiously worrying about for a long time.

“Do you know how much I’ve been searching for you?! I was so worried because you left without saying a word……. It’s, really a relief, that I found you……!”

“……Haah.”

And the expression on Jaim’s face as she received that hug, rather than being delighted, it was closer to being troubled. After raising her hair back up and putting the clothespin on as if it couldn’t be helped anymore, Jaim, who had been smacking her lips and gazing only at the sky, seemed to have recalled something as she carefully peeked at my face.

“Uhm, I’m sorry, but who are you?”

Saeyeon asked that while she was still confused, but she did so as if she had to at least know the answer to that question. However, Upperclassman Nabom raised her hand and stopped Saeyeon from continuing before taking a glance around us and speaking.

“There are a lot of people watching.”

I became aware of our surroundings because of Upperclassman Nabom’s words. We had yet to reach an area with a lot of people, but people were

passing by while shooting side-glances at the girl wearing a unique costume and the little girl who was being hugged and referred to as 'Miss'. Some of them must have been trying to find the rumored maid girl as they even took their cameras out in order to take pictures.

What should we do in a situation like this? Once I turned to look at Upperclassman Nabom who I was able to communicate with the best here, Upperclassman Nabom turned to look at me as well. I'm starting to get used to that gaze. I nodded my head before grabbing both Jaim and the maid girl's hand and pulling them up. Although the maid girl was startled by my action, I'm the one panicking right now.

"Jaro?"

"N-Now then, we'll be going first!"

"Have a safe trip, Underclassman Jin Jaro."

While ignoring Saeyeon's question which she had asked while looking this way and Upperclassman Nabom's voice which was relaxed even in a situation like this, I ran to the other side of an alley with the maid girl and Jaim.

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A park-cum-playground within a residential area that was a slight distance away from the shopping area. It was a small place where the elephant slide was its main characteristic.

It was currently a time of day where all of the elementary school students who would normally play here were at school and there wasn't anyone else in particular who would come here, so the playground was empty. If it's here, then there shouldn't be a problem even if we talked in a loud voice.

Therefore, I persuaded Jaim's cheeks as painfully as possible this time.

"Ububububububu!"

"I, told you that, I would forgive you, if you answered honestly, didn't I?!"

"Ububububububububu!"

"What do you mean 'I don't know anything'?! What do you mean 'Seriously, it's true'?! I told you that I hate liars, right? I trusted you, you brat!"

"lihurs iihurs iihurs iihurs iihurs, ad!"

Once I let go of her cheeks, Jaim rubbed her red cheeks which seemed to have stretched out a bit because I had pulled on them harder than usual this time. There were tears in her eyes.

"Tell me everything this time!"

"Excuse me, can you stop there?"

As soon as I had said that to Jaim while glaring intimidatingly at her with my hands on my hip, the maid girl, who had been watching us from a couple of steps away until now, approached us with a perplexed look on her face. Right, this girl was here as well.

“For starters, who exactly are you? How do you know this kid?”

“Uu……. D-Dad, uhe uuaiaa…….”

“You can talk after your cheeks stop hurting! Also, you aren’t allowed to touch the plastic models for a while!”

After roaring at Jaim who was mumbling incomprehensible words, I turned my gaze back towards the maid which made her flinch. She might be a bit cute.

“I-I apologize……. I didn’t mean to surprise you…….”

“So, who are you? If you’re someone suspicious, then I’m going to report you immediately.”

Once I folded my arms and glared at her, the maid girl hesitated and lowered her head.

“I-I’m not a suspicious person. I’m sorry for the late introduction.”

In response to my urging, the maid girl raised the ends of her skirt gracefully and gave a slight, elegant bow before speaking.

“It’s nice to meet you. I am a robot maid, model name XMR-MK. XXI, ‘Eureka’, that has been tasked with the job of taking care of Miss Jin Jaim. I would be grateful if you referred to me as ‘Jin Jihye’.”

“……What?”

What is this person saying all of a sudden?

“……So, why did you come here?”

However, different from my blank reaction, Jaim scowled at the mysterious girl while rubbing her cheeks.

“That is what I want to say, Miss Jin Jaim.”

In contrast to the way she spoke to me, the maid girl spoke to Jaim while slighting raising her eyebrows making it clear that she was upset.

“Do you know how much I’ve been searching for you? I was so worried because you left without saying a single word or leaving a single note!”

“There was no need for me to even tell you.”

“You are my responsibility, Miss! I was so worried because I thought that you might have been kidnapped! It is a relief that you are safe like this, but…….”

“No, wait a second. What did you say just now?”

I wasn't able to organize my thoughts completely, but once I asked that after having recovered enough to at least follow the conversation, Jaim let out a big sigh and spoke.

“It's the robot maid that you like so much, Dad.”

“……What?”

“I am a robot maid.”

I tried to repeat my question in response to the maid's polite remark, but instead of answering me, she turned back to face Jaim and spoke.

“Once you disappeared, I contacted the homes of all of your friends who were worried about you, went to every place that you could have possibly gone, and ended up contacting the police because I still couldn't find you, but the instant they told me that they've been tracking you because you traveled time illegally, I collapsed and had to reboot my system entirely. Miss, why did you come here?”

“You already know why I came here. I came here to find my dad. More importantly, I asked you why you're here.”

“I'm obviously here because I came looking for you, Miss! Now then, let us quickly return before Master starts to worry. I've already prepared everything.”

Jaim's expression contorted in response to those words and she then turned her head away.

“……No. I'm not going back.”

“Miss!”

“There's no way that Dad would be worried!”

It seems that those words agitated the maid girl as she raised her eyebrows and narrowed her eyes.

“I'll get mad if you keep behaving like this!”

“Mad? Go ahead. How are you going to get mad? Are you going to hit me? You can’t even do that! And try hitting me, if you do, then……!”

“Wait, wait a second! Let me in the conversation as well!”

Jaim and the maid girl whose noses were nearly touching, making it seem as if they were about to start fighting soon, turned towards me the instant I yelled.

“What is it, Dad? You still don’t understand?”

“……Kid, are you currently in a situation where you’re allowed to act that confident?”

“U-Uuk…….”

The fact that there must have been something she was feeling guilty about, which was apparent because she had lowered her tail immediately, helped me comprehend the situation a bit.

“……One moment, Miss. The way you have been referring to this individual has been bothering me.”

While this was happening, the maid girl was looking back and forth between me and Jaim with a displeased look on her face.

“Don’t, don’t tell me…….”

The maid girl, who had been knitting her brows as if she were in deep thought, opened her eyes wide and shouted as if she had figured something out.

“Don’t tell me, Miss, are you dabbling your hands in statutory rape by referring to this individual as your dad? Y-You mustn’t, Miss! With what face am I supposed to face Master with?!”

“What nonsense are you saying, you piece of scrap metal! He’s my dad, my dad!”

Mm, this is definitely unpleasant. The maid girl narrowed her eyes and turned to look at me in response to Jaim’s raged-filled shout before asking a question.

“Now that I look at you, I feel like I’ve met you before, but……. If it’s fine by you, may I ask you what your name is?”

“Huhuhu……. It’s been quite a while since I last gave my name formally like this.”

“……Dad, don’t flip some strange switch and just introduce yourself properly…….”

The kid stared at me with a panicked look on her face. Don’t be like that. I’ve always wanted to do something like this since a long time ago. Rationally speaking, if it weren’t a person like this, then I would never have the opportunity to reveal my name like this!

“Yes! I am the greatest scientist of this era! The mad scientist who will one day conquer the world! I am the great Jin Jaro!”

“……He did it in the end.”

While striking an amazing pose, once I gave her an introduction that ranked at about 7 of the ‘Best 10 lines that a scientist would want to shout at least once in their life’, Jaim let out a deep sigh with a down-hearted look on her face. What, you brat? My principle is to do the things that I want to do. You know that as well.

“You’re Mr. Jin Jaro?”

“……Uh, yes. I apologize.”

And I ended up inadvertently apologizing because she had responded by sincerely adding a ‘Mr’ to my name. Responding to this sort of thing seriously naturally hurt the one who said it even more. Regardless, I didn’t expect this sort of response.

This was because the maid girl was opening her eyes wide and had an honestly surprised expression on her face.

“Then, are you truly……?”

“I told you. Seriously, it’s true.”

Kid, you really took a liking to that name pun, didn’t you? I’d be grateful if you stopped using it though. In response to Jaim’s strangely proud tone, the maid girl’s face became pale.

“I apologize, Master! There was a difference in the data, so I was

discourteous……!”

“……Master?”

What exactly has this girl been saying since earlier? Jaim let out another deep, deep sigh at my question.

“I kept telling you, Dad. That she’s the thing you like a lot.”

“What’s that?”

“A robot maid.”

I shook my head at the kid’s response which she had given to me as if it were obvious.

“No, there’s no way that could be true.”

Even if I refer to myself as a ‘mad’ scientist, I haven’t gone insane yet. I’m sane.

“……You normally, no, just earlier you gave that weird self-introduction, but why aren’t you able to believe this?”

I grabbed Jaim’s shoulders as she spoke in a baffled manner, lowered myself so I could reach her eye level, and reasoned with her with a serious tone.

“Kid, let’s think about this logically. Of course, it’s not normal. Obviously, for there to be a person striding around the streets wearing a maid costume in today’s society, honestly, that’s at the point where it’s a bit concerning. Nevertheless, be that as it may, claiming that someone is a robot maid is a statement that would make others doubt your mental health.”

“Like I said…….”

“Kid, no, Jaim. Please. Let’s think about this a little. Of course, it may be concerning, but it’s possible for people who go around wearing a maid uniform to exist. It’s just that the probability of that happening is low. However, someone being a robot maid is flat-out impossible. Something like that doesn’t exist. Moreover, a robot that’s capable of responding this human-like is impossible.”

Of course, technology is something that continues to develop by each passing

day. It's true that even if bipedalism was difficult to achieve for a number of reasons, data has been accumulating and developing day after day. If so, then creating a robot that at least looked human wasn't impossible.

However, the development of artificial intelligence was incomparably slower. Last time I heard, they say an artificial intelligence with the intellect of a 3-year-old child was made, but an artificial intelligence that was capable of responding this human-like was impossible to achieve with today's science, no, it was impossible to achieve even theoretically. Although it may be possible for computers to draw a reasonable conclusion using the data which they receive from a restricted situation as its foundation, that was simply calculations. Simply a logical conclusion.

".....I wonder why you can't always think normally like this?"

"If you aren't able to distinguish the difference between reality and roleplaying, then you're basically on the border of endangering yourself."

I ignored Jaim as she shook her head while placing one hand on her forehead and raised my body back up before talking to the maid girl.

"In any case, I think I have a grasp of your situation now. Considering the fact that you know about Jaim's circumstances, it appears that you're also from the future and that you're in the position of someone who's taking care of Jaim."

"Yes. It is exactly as you have said, Master."

The maid girl bowed her head courteously. At this point, instead of a maid girl, she seemed like an actual maid.

"Since you're referring to me as Master, it seems that I'm your employer in the future, but isn't that concept of pretending to be a robot maid a bit too much? This thoroughly at that."

What sort of person was I in the future? For me to make my employees act like robot maids. Do I perhaps have a lot of money?

".....Haah. All right. I'll make her give you some service, then, Dad."

"Hm? What are you saying, kid?"

"'Eureka', show him."

Jaim ignored me and gave the maid an order. The maid started to visibly panic because of that order. Look, there's no way that a robot could react like this.

"M-Miss? B-But....."

"What are you being embarrassed about? You're just some piece of scrap metal. Hurry up. It doesn't seem like we're going to get anywhere with our conversation if we leave things like this."

"Oi, brat. You shouldn't call someone scrap metal."

"Uu..... B-Buuut..... A-As I thought, that's....."

"Hurry up. That's an order."

These two kept ignoring me. I feel like I'm going to start getting annoyed soon.

Jaim folded her arms and turned away as if she didn't have anything more to say, but the maid still didn't know what to do as she continued to squirm. However, she ended up dropping her shoulders in defeat before starting to move.

"I-If it's an order, then I'll obey....."

"Wait, what are you doing right now.....?"

The maid's hands started to move towards the end of her skirt hesitantly. Her hands twitched bit by bit and, although she looked so embarrassed that she sincerely seemed troubled, she shut her eyes resolutely, and at that same instant, she started to slowly lift her skirt up.

"Uh, w-wait! Hey, brat! What are you making her do?!"

I thought she only acted like this because she wanted to incite Saeyeon? Was her personality always like this? I should have educated her properly beforehand! Jaim was still looking away, pretending to have not heard me. This isn't good. If I don't stop her.....

".....Huh."

However, in that instant, something entered my field of vision.

The area between her skirt and garter belt, the area which a minority of

people referred to as the 'Absolute Territory', was revealed further, and the maid's skirt hesitantly went up gradually before it eventually reached her hips. Thanks to that, the area that was once hidden by her skirt entered my line of sight.

"Uu, uuu……. I-I did as you ordered……. So……."

"Wait. Stay like that."

"E-Eck? B-But……. U-uuh……!"

I grabbed her hand that was about to hastily lower her skirt in embarrassment. At the end of her laced black garter belt, black silk panties which emitted a mature and profound charm and her milky white skin were revealed. This was quite the exquisite arrangement of colors. In regards to being able to see the area which a minority of people referred to as the 'Absolute Territory', the maid was, no……. In any case, she was perplexed about what to do, but I had forcefully stopped her movements and closely examined the contents which were inside.

"……You've confirmed it, right?"

"A-A little bit longer……."

"Uuuu……. Uuuuuuh!"

I did hesitate a bit, but I carefully extended my left arm and reached my hand out towards the area beneath her skirt. I stroked the area where her leg met her body. I touched it.

"S-Stop……. Auuuuh……."

I poked it and flicked it with my finger. No, this may definitely be weird, and I knew that I'll probably be told a thing or two, but I couldn't overstate this sensation.

"……All right."

This couldn't be helped. This was my duty as a scientist. The driving force of every scientist until this moment, the curiosity that had been the driving force which developed mankind was ordering me to do this. It's fine. There's nothing weird about this.

What exactly was the layout, underneath those panties?

There was only one method of confirming this. With this hand, in that unknown territory…….

“Y-You can’t!”

“Uack!”

And in that instant, I was shoved and ended up falling backward.

“Scrap metal, you! The 1st law!”

“I-I apologize! B-But! But still!”

Jaim glared fiercely while the perplexed ‘Eureka’ shouted. Once I rubbed the back of my head after properly rolling on the ground and hitting the ground, the maid immediately ran up to me and knelt down.

“I-I’m really sorry! I didn’t mean to, it’s just that!”

“……It’s real…….”

However, I could only mumble absentmindedly because of what I had witnessed and the sensation I had felt.

“……Pardon?”

“It’s real! She’s real!”

Although the surprised ‘Eureka’ tilted her head in confusion, I ended up hugging her. I could feel her squirming underneath my arms.

“What are you doing, Dad?!”

Jaim fumed and shouted, but the sound that I could hear beyond that, it was so close that rather than it being heard through my ears, I could hear it through the vibrations of the body…….

It was clearly not the sound of a beating heart that you’d normally hear from a human, but the sound of machinery.

Her outer appearance was definitely that of a human, but when the contents inside of her skirt, the areas of her pelvis that connected her legs to her body were revealed, I had no other choice but to doubt my eyes. There was no

smooth skin in that place, but there was a mechanical joint instead.

It wasn't a prosthetic leg. It wasn't magic. It wasn't a trick either.

"It's a real, robot maid……!"

"Okay, stop right there and back away, you technophile!"

"I'm not a technophile! I'm simply a scientist!"

"You put your hand underneath a girl's skirt and did this and that!"

"You're the one who told me to do it, you pervert!"

"I only told you to look, I never said that you should go that far!"

Jaim dragged me away while I was being emotional and 'Eureka' quickly stood up as well. The way she dusted her knees was incredibly natural and her expression could only be seen as human, but…….

"In any case, you've confirmed it now, right?"

I was pulled back into reality by Jaim's unsatisfied words which she had said while pouting. Jaim turned her narrowed eyes to look at 'Eureka' and spoke.

"I'll question you about going against the 1st law later, but you confirmed it as well, right?"

"Y-Yes……. I-It seems that he's definitely Master……."

Jaim nodded in response to 'Eureka's' stammering answer and spoke.

"That's why I'm not going to go back right now. I'm not being held captive by weird people either. I came here because I wanted to and you've confirmed my safety now, haven't you?"

"No, I cannot allow that."

However, once she heard those words, 'Eureka' erased any sign of her perplexity and returned back to her previous, thorough maid attitude and shook her head.

"Even if you're safe, Miss, my duty is to take care of you. I cannot allow you stay like this and be treated like a criminal. I was able to negotiate with them and we came to a deal that you will not be held responsible as long as you go

back with me right this instant. Now then, let us go.”

“I. Told. You. I’m. Not. Going.”

“What will you do about school? And Master who is worried about you? Stop behaving like a stubborn child and let us go!”

“I absolutely will not go!”

Jaim yelled as loud as she could, make it clear that she sincerely didn’t want to go. ‘Eureka’ glanced at Jaim with a troubled look on her face before turning to face me.

“Master, please do something as well.”

“No, even if you tell me…….”

‘Eureka’ looked at me dolefully and desperately. I let out a small sigh because of those transparent pupils and turned to Jaim.

“Hey, Jaim…….”

“What? Are you going to try and kick me out again, Dad?”

I tried to sound as attentive as possible, but Jaim cut me off and spoke angrily.

“No, I’m not trying to do that. I just think we should at least hear her out…….”

“There’s nothing to hear. I’m not going back. Don’t you need me in order to do that family experiment? You aren’t going to tell me to go back as well, right?”

“Family experiment?”

‘Eureka’ looked back and forth between me and Jaim as if she had no idea what we were talking about. However, instead of answering her, I let out a sigh and spoke.

“Like I said, I’m not telling you to go back. But, this per……. This person also has a point.”

“She doesn’t! Everything will be fine as long as this piece of scrap metal goes home!”

“Miss! If you keep behaving like this, then I also have a plan!”

In response to 'Eureka's' strong-spoken words, Jaim raised her brows in a taunting manner and spoke.

"Plan? What do you intend to do?"

Without avoiding her gaze, 'Eureka' shouted confidently.

"I will also stay here until you go back, Miss!"

.....Was that the extent of her plan?

It seems Jaim was dumbfounded by this as well as she snorted.

"Do what you want. That's unrelated to me."

"I wonder?"

Additionally, 'Eureka' didn't show any sign of being daunted by Jaim's words. 'Eureka' turned towards me and spoke.

"Master?"

".....Huh? Y-Yeah?"

"For that reason, I will be in your care from this day forth."

"What?!"

Jaim was the first one to shout in response to 'Eureka's' words which she had said while bowing courteously. 'Eureka' must have enjoyed that reaction as she smiled happily as she spoke.

"I am Master's robot maid, and I am also your guardian, Miss. Even if we're in the past now, these facts don't change. Since this is the case, if I wish to satisfy both of these conditions, then wouldn't it be obvious for me to carry out my duty faithfully in Master's household? This is only natural."

"Don't make me laugh! Go home immediately!"

"I can't do that! There is only one situation where I will go back, and that is if I'm bringing you with me, Miss!"

"Wait a second, the two of you! Why are you mixing me in this as well?!"

Jaim and 'Eureka' both turned to look at me at the same time the instant I let out that exclamation which I couldn't hold back. Jaim looked upset while

‘Eureka’ looked sad.

“Dad, don’t tell me you intend to listen to this piece of scrap metal’s words. More importantly, what do you mean by mixing you in?! You’re my dad!”

“Master, don’t tell me you wish to throw me away. If you don’t take me in, Master, then I’ll have nowhere else to go.”

“Uhm, where did you stay until now……?”

Let’s answer this first. ‘Eureka’ answered my question with a troubled look on her face.

“I did stay here and there, but there was a problem in each one of those places so I was kicked out from all of them. At first, someone asked me if I knew what ‘spirits’ were, so I was able to pass a night listening to their explanation, but when I told them that I didn’t have any money on me, I was chased out in the middle of the night. I was taken in by a church and did volunteer work for them for around two days, but when I was changing clothes, they called me a Doll of Satan and chased me out. Even when I went to the trustworthy police station, they declined my request saying that ‘they couldn’t find a girl with a clothespin in her hair’. For the past two days, I did request if I could sleep between the old men in the subway station, but a worker kicked me out, so, today, I was considering whether I should sleep on the streets or, since I cannot violate the 3rd law of the Three Laws of Robotics, commit a misdemeanor and stay in a jail cell at a police station…….”

(TL note: The Three Laws of Robotics created by Isaac Asimov.

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

2. A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.)

“…….”

What could I say?

While I was smacking my lips, ‘Eureka’ grabbed both of my hands and looked straight at me. I wonder if there was some sort of heating system installed

underneath her artificial skin as I could feel a slightly warm and smooth sensation.

“I beg of you, Master. I can’t go back by myself without the Miss. If you can’t take me under your wing, then at the very least, please persuade…….”

“I’m not going back! It doesn’t matter whether something happens to that piece of scrap metal or not, right?!”

A glint of sadness appeared on ‘Eureka’s face the instant Jaim shouted and cut her off mid-sentence. Ah, this was annoying. There were a lot of problems with bringing her home, but I wasn’t confident that I’d be able to persuade Jaim.

“……It can’t be helped.”

“Dad?”

Jaim must have immediately realized what my intentions were the instant she saw me let out a sigh as Jaim spoke up. Nevertheless, it couldn’t be helped. I looked at ‘Eureka’ and spoke.

“All right. If it’s for only a couple of days, then it’s fine. But you’re going to have to do some chores in…….”

“Leave them to me! I will do all of the chores so that they don’t interfere with your research or livelihood, Master! That’s my purpose as a robot maid!”

This fellow also recovers really quickly. She had an incredibly elated expression on her face.

“Were you enticed by her just because she’s a robot maid? You backstabber!”

I spoke in a small voice towards Jaim who was glaring daggers at me.

“How am I backstabbing you? In a situation like this, it’d be a nuisance even if we just left her. What do you think will happen if she breaks somewhere or gets reported?”

“……Mm.”

Jaim seemed to have understood what I was getting at since she now looked displeased. After the previous incident, we had created all sorts of documents in order to show that Jaim existed in this period of time. She has a family

register and there were also documents which declared that I was her guardian.

However, there were two issues. The first issue was the fact that all of these documents were forged, and the second issue was the fact that since this robot maid clearly knew about Jaim's existence, if forced, the foundation of the documents could be questioned.

Both situations weren't good for me and Jaim. If a problem arises, then Jaim will have to go back and I'll also have to deal with a bunch of annoyances.

"For now, let's hear about the details at home. Let's talk about Saeyeon as well."

"Saeyeon..... Who do you mean by that?"

"He's talking about Mom."

Once Jaim answered 'Eureka' who had asked that while tilting her head, 'Eureka' promptly understood as she nodded her head.

".....Haa."

I let out another sigh as I looked up at the sky that had already become yellow. This was annoying.

The first problem was making an excuse to give to Saeyeon. The second problem was that there was going to be another freeloader who I was going to have to spend our already lacking funds on. Hopefully, she doesn't have to eat. And finally, the third problem.....

"....."

Because at the very least, I knew why Jaim, who was making that forlorn expression right now, didn't want to go back to the future.

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“Okay? Don’t say anything weird.”

‘Eureka’ nodded in response to my words which I was saying as a final reminder before opening the front door.

“I know. You’ve been emphasizing it this much, Master.”

“……I wonder if it’ll work out.”

“Jaim, don’t say something that can jinx us.”

Simply coming all the way here from the playground caused a lot of problems.

On our way home, there were people who would stare at us and whisper among one another when they saw us walking together with a weird girl wearing a maid uniform, the guard in the security office of the apartment complex looked at us dubiously, and it would have been great if we at least rode the elevator by ourselves, but we ended up spending a painful amount of time in a box where we had no place to escape.

“……All right.”

Once I made my resolve and opened the door, Saeyeon, who was sitting down with her school uniform still on, immediately stood up and ran up to us.

“Really, where did you guys go? I was surprised when the two of you disappeared all of a sudden! Who was that person earlier……?”

She sounded upset at first and then worried, but when Saeyeon’s quickly changing expression locked on to ‘the person’ following behind me and Jaim, she froze.

Even for Saeyeon, this must have been unexpected. I tried my best to not panic and spoke as naturally as I could…….

“Y-Yeah, something came up…….”

“Huh, I thought she was Jaim’s acquaintance, but was she actually a guest? You should have told me beforehand. I would have cleaned up the place.”

However, Saeyeon grinned brightly as if to make my previous concern completely pointless. Well, it’s Saeyeon. Saeyeon tidied her skirt and shirt, which had wrinkled a bit because she had been sitting down, and smiled at ‘Eureka’.

“Welcome. Make yourself at home. How do you know Jaim? This is the first time that one of Jaim’s friends came over.”

You settled on her being a friend even though you just asked her how she knows Jaim? However, instead of making a rebuttal, I remained silent because it was a question that we had already predicted.

‘Eureka’ bowed and gave her the answer which we had come up with earlier.

“It’s nice to meet you. My name is Jin Jihye and I’m in charge of taking care of Miss Jin Jaim.”

……Now that I think about it, who gave her that name?

(TL note: ‘Jin Jihye’ is also similar to Jaro and Jaim’s names as it can be read as “I’m serious”)

The plan was basically like this. At the very least, Saeyeon understood that Jaim wasn’t a child who was born after we slept while holding hands, and since I had established the setting that Jaim was my half-sibling, we matched ‘Eureka’s’ background with this and made her reveal herself as an employee of my parents and that she was the one who was originally taking care of Jaim as her nanny. This currently made the most sense after all.

“Ah, is that so? I’m Jjaro’s wife, Ja Saeyeon.”

And as I expected, Saeyeon simply introduced herself courteously in response to that setting. There was a part of Saeyeon’s self-introduction that I wanted to nitpick about, but this wasn’t the right time to make a rebuttal, so I’ll ignore it for now.

“Everything was resolved when I decided to take care of Jaim, but apparently,

she came here because she was worried about how Jaim has been doing. She's going to be staying with us for a couple of days."

"Ah, I see. Thank you for taking care of Jaim."

".....Hmph."

Jaim turned her head away and pouted. The two of them clearly didn't get along. I have a rough guess as to why.

"Now then, please enter. Ah, Jjaro. Should I brew some tea in a situation like this? I don't know how to brew tea, though....."

"I'll do it, so you can go sit down."

In any case, it was a relief that things went well. The fabricated stories made by my gifted brain were amazing. I'll give it something sweet as a reward in a second. After taking a glance at 'Eureka' and Jaim, I headed towards the kitchen. Some snacks and coffee mix should be good enough. Now that I think about it, is it fine for a robot to drink coffee? Can she sleep? While I was having those thoughts, I started to hear voices coming from the living room. It seems 'Eureka' and Saeyeon were having a conversation with Jaim as the main topic.

"How was Jaim like in the past?"

"Miss Jaim has always been a kind girl. I can only be grateful for how well she listened to me."

.....They definitely didn't seem like they got along with each other that much. Moreover, I couldn't even imagine Jaim being a 'well-behaved and kind, little girl'.

"Right? Ehehe."

After putting the kettle on the stove, I opened the cupboard and took out the cookies which I kept hidden from Saeyeon and Jaim. These were expensive. Well, I was going to give these out as snacks anyway, so it didn't matter that much.

"Still, I was really worried when the Miss ran away from home all of a sudden. She must be in her rebellious period since she refused to listen to me and disappeared without a word....."

“Jaim, did you come here without saying anything? That’s not good. Bad.”

“There was no particular need for me to say anything. No one would have worried about me anyway.”

“That’s bad, Jaim. She must have been really worried.”

“I also feel like I didn’t educate her enough in that regard. Even now, the Miss is refusing to return home.”

“I’m pretty sure I told you clearly that I’m not going back.”

“Bad! You shouldn’t talk like that to an adult! More importantly, you’re going to take Jaim back? But Jjarro said…….”

“No, I’m not going back, Mom, so you don’t have to worry. Scra……. Jihye, you’re not worried anymore since you’ve found me, right?”

……I should quickly boil this and go to them. No, should I just go out now? I can prepare everything once the water starts boiling. I moved towards the living room where the relatively risky conversation was being held. For now, I only brought the snacks with me.

“Ah, Jjarro.”

Saeyeon noticed my approach in an instant.

“It’s going to take a while before the water starts boiling, so have these snacks for now.”

“Wow, aren’t these the expensive snacks?! Are we having these because we have a guest?”

“Well, something like that. Are you glad that Miss Jihye is here?”

After saying that to the delighted Saeyeon, I put the tray of snacks down on the table and whispered to ‘Eureka’ in a small voice.

“Are you able to eat snacks?”

“It’s fine. I also have a digestive system.”

They added a digestive system to a robot? How impressive, future technology. If snacks are fine, then some coffee should be okay as well.

“Then with pleasure.”

With completely natural movements, ‘Eureka’ brought a cookie to her mouth. Saeyeon and Jaim also grabbed a cookie of their own and munched on them. It must have been tasty as Saeyeon smiled and Jaim smiled because of Saeyeon’s happy expression. What a nice and warm scene. ‘Eureka’s’ mouth moved in a way that savored the taste of the snack while she was in an elegant pose that made it even more unbelievable that she was a robot.

“Certainly, simply knowing that the Miss is safe is enough to make me feel a bit relieved. Nevertheless, I didn’t expect her to come to the past, so I was really shocked when I found out about it.”

“.....”

“.....”

‘Eureka’ blinked her eyes in confusion when she noticed that Saeyeon and Jaim had stopped chewing on their cookies and were looking at her.

“Hm? What’s wrong?”

“No, uhm, Big Sis Jihye, what did you say just now?”

“I said that I’m relieved since I was able to confirm that the Miss is safe. Although her traveling through time illegally in order to come to the past was a bit unexpected.”

This girl, isn’t she completely unaware of what she’s saying right now?

“I-In other words, what Miss Jihya is saying is.....”

“Still, the fact that she came here in order to meet Master and his wife is rather adorable. It is a bit troublesome since she doesn’t want to go back to the future, though.”

I tried to somehow cover things up, but it seems ‘Eureka’ wasn’t able to grasp what the problem was as she continued to talk naturally.

“So Mrs. Ja Saeyeon as well, please..... Ueb!”

“Ha, hahahaha! R-Really, Jihye! You shouldn’t make jokes like that. Sorry, Mom. Jihye likes to go into her own dream world sometimes..... A-As you can

see, she also goes around weird clothes, right?”

Jaim blocked ‘Eureka’s’ mouth before she could say anything more. But it’s too late, kid. With her eyes held wide open, Saeyeon lowered her cookie onto the tray.

“If you came from the future, and I’m the wife, then…….”

“Saeyeon, that’s just…….”

PSSSSST——! With perfect timing, the kettle let out a shrill sound and cut me off.

“Jjaro, the water, is boiling…….”

“I-It’s fine, so…….”

“Uah, Dad, the water! The water is overflowing!”

CHSSSSK——! The overflowing water let out a sizzling sound as it touched the stove. What do I do? However, before I could even think of an idea, my body was already running towards the kitchen in order to turn the stove off. I could hear Saeyeon’s calm voice behind me.

“……Then, is Jaim, really Jjaro and my……?”

“M-Mom, that’s just Jihye’s…….”

“Jaim, let Big Sis Jihye go.”

A serious tone that wasn’t like the normal Saeyeon. I stuck my head out in order to look at the living room. Jaim hesitated at first, but in the end, it seems she couldn’t win as she removed her hands from ‘Eureka’s’ mouth. ‘Eureka’ nodded and continued.

“Yes. Miss Jin Jaim is your and Master’s daughter. Furthermore, I’m a robot maid that’s taking care of the Miss.”

“……Ah!”

I forgot about the heat of the overflowing water and tossed the dishcloth which I was using half-heartedly and ran out to the living room. It didn’t even take me more than three steps, but Saeyeon had already lowered her head before then.

What should I do? Do I have to keep making excuses? But.

“S-Saeyeon, we weren’t trying to hide it from you, we just…….”

I no longer had the time to calculate things as I grabbed Saeyeon’s shoulders while I tried to talk. However, Saeyeon didn’t raise her head and simply trembled slightly.

“Saeyeon!”

“Jjaro!”

So right when I was about to pull her up, Saeyeon threw her body forward and wrapped her arms around my neck, making both of us fall over. The same spot of my head that hit the ground of the playground earlier collided with the floor again so I started to see stars.

“Uuuhk…….”

I shook my head in order to shake the pain away before opening my eyes.

Right in front of me, Saeyeon’s large, clear, and transparent eyes were filling my entire field of view.

“Jjaro! She said Jaim is our daughter! We’re, going to get married!”

Saeyeon was grabbing both of my hands. While leaning her weight on my hands, Saeyeon was smiling brightly as if she were at the peak of her happiness.

“We’re, really, going to get married!”

“……Yeah. It seems so. So can you get off of me now?”

Well, there’s no way that Saeyeon would have been shocked by this news.

She’d probably be elated. It’s Saeyeon after all.

Saeyeon finally moved so I was able to raise my upper body, but she threw herself into my arms again. Her arms hugged my body powerfully.

“I knew that was a confession! I knew it, it really meant, that Jjaro likes me!”

“I-I can’t breathe…….”

“Ah, s-sorry! I was just so happy!”

Once I let out that grunt, Saeyeon released me from her embrace and instead

grabbed both of my hands again and shook them up and down.

“My dream is going to come true! I’m going to actually get married to Jjaro and become Jjaro’s wife!”

“I get it. I get it, so can we do this later?”

“Jjaro are you not happy? Hm? Your dream comes true as well! You always said that you’re going to invent a robot maid thing!”

“.....Yeah.”

This girl, she’s getting thrilled about that as well.

It was hard trying to say something to Saeyeon who was smiling so cheerfully, so I simply turned away. My face felt a bit warm. Not a lot. Only a little.

“Now then, ma’am. I have a request.”

“What is it? Ask me anything!”

Saeyeon turned around and answered ‘Eureka’ who had carefully asked that behind Saeyeon. As if she truly felt sorry, ‘Eureka’ spoke while marginally lowering her large blue eyes.

“Uhm……. I’m sorry to say this while you’re so elated, but I wish to take the Miss back to the future before Master starts to worry.”

“.....Ah.”

And, in response to those words, Saeyeon’s shoulders dropped.

“Scrap metal, in a situation like this, you……!”

Jaim was angered by that and approached ‘Eureka’, but Saeyeon shook her head and poke.

“No, it’s okay, Jaim. It’s natural.”

“.....Natural……?”

Jaim instantly became disheartened. Saeyeon pulled Jaim into a hug with a sad look on her face and spoke.

“I’m only sad because I don’t have an adorable Jaim like this yet. I don’t want Jaim to go back either.”

After saying that, Saeyeon released Jaim from her embrace and looked at her.

“But as much as I like Jaim, future Jjaro and future me must be that worried about Jaim as well, right? If Jaim disappeared one day without saying a word to me, then I’d be really sad.”

“.....”

Jaim averted her gaze and dropped her head. Saeyeon, who had no way of knowing what the meaning behind that reaction was, must have thought that Jaim was thinking about how her future self would react as she smiled gently.

“Unlike Jjaro, your mom isn’t good at science or technology, but if you’re here because time machines actually exist, then you can come back whenever you want to, right? If so, then you can come visit us whenever you want to see the younger version of your mom. So I was wondering if it would be fine for you to go back before future me starts to worry.”

“.....Mom, so you really do want me to go back home?”

“Of course not! But still..... Future me must love Jaim as much as I do, right?”

Saeyeon smiled sadly as if she were trying her best to reassure Jaim.

Those words made Jaim look like she was about to cry even more.

Saeyeon didn’t know.

The fact that Saeyeon wasn’t in the future that Jaim came from. The fact that she left after getting into a fight with me while Jaim was little and never came back.

The fact that she fell into sorrow and despair because she heard words that she had never expected to hear from me, the person that she liked so much, and left my side.

“Uhm, Mrs. Ja Saeyeon, I sincerely apologize, but.....”

“.....Stop.”

“In the future, you.....”

“I told you to stop!!”

Everyone turned to look at me the instant I yelled loudly in order to cut

‘Eureka’ off.

My fists shook. I must have been digging my nails into my skin as my palms hurt. My teeth which I was clenching audibly hurt as well.

“.....Jjaro?”

Saeyeon was looking at me with wide eyes.

“.....I’m sorry.”

‘Eureka’ silently lowered her head.

Jaim simply looked at me without a word.

There was a moment of silence. Only the sound of the clock ticking could be heard.

I had to change the mood and as someone who always roleplayed, this was an easy task. I forced myself to grin stupidly like I always did in the past and fixed my glasses.

“No, telling Jaim to go back in a situation like this would be mean, wouldn’t it? Don’t say things like that. Oh, right. You said that you were here to take Jaim back to the future, right?”

“Yes? Yes.”

“Then wouldn’t things be fine if you just confirm one thing? Do you have a device that lets you communicate with the future?”

“Yes. It’s possible. Why do you ask?”

In response to that answer, I spoke towards Saeyeon who still didn’t understand what was going on.

“Well, if that’s the case, then can’t you call the people in the future and tell them ‘We’re taking proper care of Jaim, so you don’t have to worry’? If you do that, then wouldn’t it be fine for Jaim to stay with us for a while longer? Right, Saeyeon?”

“Huh? Ah, yeah! If I got a phone call telling me that, then even I would stop worrying.”

Saeyeon finally understood what I was trying to say as she started to beam.

“Still, I feel like it would be weird……. Calling my future self.”

“No, I’ll handle the phone call. That’s the dad’s job.”

“Jjaro…….”

Ack, don’t look at me with such sparkling eyes as if you’ve been moved. I didn’t mean it like that. I didn’t, but I had to appear like I did on the outside.

I turned towards ‘Eureka’ and spoke.

“So, contact the people in the future and tell them that we’ll be taking care of Jaim for a bit longer. That’s fine, isn’t it?”

“Yes, I understand. However, please allow me to stay here until the day I have to take the Miss back. Would that be all right, Master, Ma’am?”

“That’s fine by me. Jaim as well, you like that Big Sis Jihye is here as well, right?”

“……She’s not a big sis, though.”

Jaim pouted, clearly still displeased, but since she knew that this was the best conclusion we could reach in this situation, she didn’t say anything more. I exchanged glances with Jaim before turning towards ‘Eureka’ and speaking.

“Then, let’s go to my room for a second so we can contact the future. Jaim. I boiled the water, so the coffee……. Nevermind, get some juice from the fridge and drink that with the snacks. Saeyeon, you as well.”

“Ah, if it’s that much, then I’ll do it! Jaim, you wait here, okay?”

Saeyeon smiled as she nodded and headed towards the kitchen while ‘Eureka’ and I headed towards my room. Jaim glanced at me for a moment before turning away and mumbling.

“……Dad, that stuck out.”

“……I know.”

That’s why I intend to educate this girl right now.

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“Don’t ever say anything about the future near Saeyeon again. Especially the breaking up part.”

“The breaking up……. Part?”

“Especially that part, but don’t mention anything else either. If you manage this, then I’ll forgive you for going on and on about the future even though we specifically told you not to.”

‘Eureka’ tilted her head. She looked as if she didn’t know what I was talking about. So this is why the brat kept calling her a piece of scrap metal.

“Seriously, we clearly told you not to! Saeyeon didn’t know what Jaim was and that she was from the future, so I told you to just go along with my story!”

‘Eureka’ flinched because of my loud voice.

“I-I’m sorry! I-I enjoy talking, so there are times where I unintentionally……. Uu.”

“In other words, you’re saying that there’s a chance that something like this could happen again?”

Once I said that while pressing a large wrench underneath her neck, ‘Eureka’ shook her head both frantically and desperately.

“No, of course not! This will never happen again!”

“Do you understand? If you do this one more time, then I’m going to take you apart! If it’s my ability, then regardless of whether it’s technology from the future or not, I can disassemble something until it’s nothing more than nuts and bolts in less than a minute!”

“I-I absolutely won’t do it again!”

She's good at answering. Her answer didn't feel that credible, but since I've threatened her, it should probably be okay for now.

But why does she look so serious this time? She's mumbling 'Don't, I have to stop myself. I mustn't.' to herself. Did I go too far with my threat? Well, the fact that she was taking my words to heart was a good sign.

".....Now that I think about it, 'Eureka', you gave up surprisingly easily."

"Pardon? What do you mean?"

"Earlier you said that you'll bring Jaim back at all cost, but it feels like you gave up rather meekly. Will it really be fine if we just contact the future?"

"No, but it was Master's order."

'Eureka' answered while brimming with confidence. She appeared strangely proud.

"Well, I guess you would listen to your Master's orders..... You're a robot after all."

"No, that's not the only reason."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

When I turned around to ask her that, I was surprised. She wasn't there. When I looked down, 'Eureka' was on her knees and pressing her lips slightly on my foot. What, why was she doing this?

"W-What are you doing, this is embarrassing."

"You're this sort of existence to us robot maids, Master."

No, I have no idea what you're saying. What does this have to do with kissing my foot? Wait, but this was definitely the symbol that represented the relationship between master and servant, wasn't it?

"Since you're our creator, Master. If you give us an order, then we have to fulfill it no matter what and we'll obey you happily."

Her expression looked as if she were looking at a king, no, a god.

".....Creator?"

“Yes. Since you’re our creator. Master Jin Jaro.”

‘Eureka’ nodded her head and confirmed it once more while even saying my name this time. Wait, does this mean, in other words…….

“……I’m, seriously the one who invented and built robot maids?”

“Correct. Master Jin Jaro is the creator of all robot maids.”

With a tone that sounded bizarrely lofty, ‘Eureka’ spoke reverently.

“In the future, Master creates the first version of robot maids, XMR-Mk. X ‘Prophet’, before even entering university, and using that as your foundation, you advanced your ability even further before establishing a business called ‘The Millenium’ and distributing us throughout the world. This is a great honor to be able to tell you this.”

“O-Oooh……!”

……But it seems my sickness wasn’t cured by that time either. This was a bit sad.

In any case, was it true? Was she serious? Of course, I did have that sort of dream and ideal, but hearing it like this made it seem silly.

“Do I look like someone who would lie?”

“Sorry, but my trust in you is currently at rock bottom.”

“Uu……. L-Let’s call what happened earlier my unique trait…….”

You’re already chapfallen? More important, there’s another part that was bothering me now that I thought about it.

“In the first place, Jaim didn’t even know that I invented robot maids. If what you’re saying is true, then why didn’t she know?”

“Because Master ordered us to not tell her.”

“……Considering my personality, I feel like there’s no way that I wouldn’t tell her.”

Well, Jaim did say that her relationship with the future me wasn’t good. Although that was a statement that lacked credibility in itself…….

“Still……. If that’s true, then doesn’t that mean I’m amazing?”

“Yes. Master is amazing.”

“I see……. Of course I am. There’s no way that I would be a self-addressed genius who was only all talk……. I’m the greatest scientist of this era, mad scientist Jin Jaro!”

“Yes. Master is the greatest scientist of this era.”

“I see……. It was like that……. Fu-uahahahahahaha!”

“Although you were fired from your company in the end.”

……Silence.

So that was also true? Now I suddenly feel depressed.

“Your aggressive management became a problem, so by the decision of the board of directors, the 7 disciples, you were fired. But don’t worry. Those scoundrels will one day pay for their crimes at Master’s hands!”

“So I didn’t forget about that even then…….”

This was starting to go beyond being sad and was simply embarrassing now. Well, I’ll forget about it for now.

“Thus, Master, if possible, please call me ‘Jihye’.”

“Hm?”

What was she saying now? ‘Eureka’ answered hesitantly.

“Uhm……. To us robot maids, Master referring to us by our proper names is the greatest honor that we could possibly receive. I’m just asking, if possible……. Could you, call me that……?”

“Well, all right. I just have to call you Jihye, right?”

It wasn’t particularly difficult either. Once I gave her that answer, Jihye’s expression lit up incredibly and her eyes sparkled as she brought her hands together.

“Yes! Please call me that! Thank you very much, Master!”

She was getting so excited despite being a robot. This was a bit embarrassing.

It must have really been an honor. I cleared my throat and calmed myself down before asking her a question.

“In any case, so you’re saying that I created every robot maid?”

“That is correct.”

“All right. **Strip.**”

Jihye’s elated face immediately stiffened because of my words.

“.....Pardon?”

“I told you to strip.”

“Uhm, Master, I don’t know what the undertone behind your words is.....”

“I said strip. It’s not going to hurt.”

I took my utility belt off and placed it on top of my worktable. It might get in my way. I took my coat off as well. This was for the same reason.

“M-Master? Yes, receiving Master’s grace is something to be happy about, but shouldn’t something like this be done with someone you love, and if possible, a person.....”

“Don’t worry. This isn’t something like that.”

I opened my drawer and took out all of my tools that seemed roughly useable. Mm, would I need a welding machine as well?

“B-But, no matter how I look at it, you look like you’re contemplating on what size would fit the hole..... W-Why are you taking out a welding machine?!”

“Obviously it’s so that I can get rid of everything the instant you strip. Now stop wasting time and strip. How do you expect me to **take you apart?**”

“.....Pardon?”

Jihye’s expression froze in a shocked state.

“If I’m going to look at your contents and get a grasp of your structure by dismantling you, then you have to take your clothes off. My research is still lacking, so there are a couple of parts that I’m curious about.”

Honestly, I wanted to do this the instant she raised her skirt earlier, but as I

expected, this was better to do at home where I had access to all sorts of tools.

“D-Does that mean, you intend to dispose of me……? I-I’m sorry! I-I won’t talk needlessly ever again! Please forgive me! S-Spare me!”

“It’s fine. After I dismantle you, I’ll put you back together properly. So don’t worry about that and strip.”

“B-But, the current Master is still…….”

“This is an order as your creator, strip!”

“Uuu……. I-If it’s an order, I have to obey, but…….”

Jihye twisted her body peculiarly and still appeared to be hesitating.

“A-Are you serious? I-Is this an order that I absolutely have to follow……?”

“You’re the one who said that you’ll happily listen to any of my orders earlier.”

“Well, I did say that, but…….”

“What’s the problem? Do you think that I won’t be able to put you back together properly?”

“That’s also an issue, but more than that…….”

As if she couldn’t endure it any longer, Jihye covered her face with her hands and spoke in a small voice.

“I-It’s embarrassing……. T-To take off my clothes in front of a boy…….”

“What are you getting embarrassed about when you’re a robot?”

“I-I believe that you shouldn’t do lewd things!”

“Where did you learn that nonsense from? If you don’t strip, then I’ll strip you myself, you know?”

In the end, I couldn’t hold back any longer and grabbed Jihye’s clothes as she hesitated. However, Jihye grabbed my hand and her clothes and shouted.

“Y-You mustn’t, Master! Master has a wife and daughter……!”

“The two of them aren’t here right now! Now then, stop saying unnecessary things and strip!”

“Jaro, are you still on the phon…….”

“Dad, the coffee is going to get col…….”

Click, ‘Eureka’ and my head slowly turned towards the door as it opened audibly.

I could see Saeyeon’s face that had frozen while smiling and Saeyeon’s sour face which was gradually becoming blank through the crevice of the door.

“……Uh, t-this is…….”

“…….”

Those faces, were impressive. A chill went down my spine.

“I-I see……. J-Jaro, really isn’t……, in humans…….”

“…….”

Saeyeon looked as if she were about to cry. Jaim’s expression went beyond being blank and now she appeared as if she were looking at a drain that hadn’t been cleaned for a month during the middle of the summer.

“No, this isn’t anything like that!”

“O-Of course!”

I shouted while waving my arms and Jihye fixed her clothes which I had creased.

Creak, click. The door closed.

It took exactly 3 hours, 35 minutes, and 12 seconds to explain myself.

……Although it didn’t feel like the misunderstanding was resolved that much.

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20XX-May-4th. Clear weather☆

Please circle
today's weather.



Does Jjaro really like maids?

Would Jjaro like me if I was also a maid?

But what is a maid?

Even though he didn't try to strip me when I put the clothes on last time.

Jjaro is a dummy -3-

TL note: Thank you for reading the chapter. This chapter was much longer than I originally thought it would be, like a LOT longer. I sincerely apologize for the delay, but I had some personal matters I had to take care of first before I could focus on translating. The personal matter being my driver license test. It took me a solid 2 weeks to quickly practice/study for it and I finally received my license last Wednesday. I got back into my translation groove once I got my license, so I managed to translate about 13k words since Thursday.

In other news, I'll be gone for another week because I received a letter from the government telling me that I have to participate in the reserved troops training starting next Monday. If I'm correct, this is something every male citizen has to go through annually, so I have to go no matter what or I'll probably get arrested.

I'll also make an announcement/update post once I'm back since something may or may not happen. It's something that will most definitely take up a lot of my time, so I'll probably end up going on a temporary hiatus. Don't worry, I'm not going off to die somewhere. I'll most definitely be back if the next volume of Dungeon Defense is released.

In any case, I hope to see you guys after my reserved troops training. Hope I don't die.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 3

3. Daily life

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“Jaro, what happened last week?”

The weekend where I thoroughly experienced how an alienated and lonely head of household felt like ended and Monday had arrived. Nanda was waiting for me the instant I entered the classroom.

“Not to mention the fact that you didn’t come to school with Saeyeon and Jaim today.”

“.....Well, this and that happened.”

This was something that I couldn’t talk about. Once I let out a sigh, Nanda tilted his head quizzically before he let out an ‘Ah’ and grinned as he nodded his head.

“Something happened between you and that girl who was wearing a maid uniform, right?”

“.....Well, I guess you could say that.”

It wasn’t that he could say that, but rather, he was completely on the money,

but there was probably no need for me to tell him that.

Nanda's chuckling expression that looked as if he expected this was annoying.

"So, who is she? When I called your place and asked if I could talk to you, both Saeyeon and Jaim refused to give you the phone, so I've been curious all weekend."

"Something like that happened as well, huh?"

"Don't leave anything out and tell us everything."

"Everyone wants to know. Huh, Jaro?"

".....Fine, I expected this sort of development."

After seeing my classmates gather behind Nanda, I let out a deep sigh. Seriously, these untaught masses were already being pushy this early in the morning. Well, whatever.

"Eh, so....."

"Taemin said it before, but it's that sort of business, right?"

"Say something that makes sense. There's no way that that sort of place which overflows with men's hopes and dreams would be established in this neighborhood or even this country."

"Isn't it like a maid cafe? If they're hiring part-time workers, then I might be a bit interested....."

"Sooah, even you..... Well, I do admit that her clothes were pretty."

"Seeing that Saeyeon and Jaim didn't come to school with him, I feel like something more happened. An illicit love?"

"Involving this guy? Do you think that kind of girl could exist?"

"No. If she's weird enough to go around wearing a maid uniform, then she might match Jaro like Saeyeon does, but in a different meaning."

"Isn't it just Jaro's delusions? He's been saying weird things since a long time ago."

"So what exactly is a maid cafe?"

“If you guys have no intention of listening to me, then I’m going to stop.”

“All right, all right. Calm down, everyone. Please tell us what happened, Jjaro.”

The noisy untaught masses stopped talking the instant Nanda spoke up. This guy, his leadership skill was impressive. Are popular people all like this?

I let out a small sigh in response to my classmates’ curiosity-filled gazes and spoke.

“Eh……. To give you guys a simple explanation, she’s an employee that was sent here by those people who threw me away and are currently living comfortably overseas so that they could take Jaim back. After she told me this, I brought her back to my place and I’m now trying to convince her to give up.”

As I expected, this story sounded the most plausible. I gave them this explanation after smacking my lips in a way that made it seem like I was really troubled. Albeit, I actually was troubled.

After the previous incident, because our homeroom teacher had arbitrarily told my classmates about my family situation, they all reacted in their own way and turned away since they knew about my circumstances.

“Isn’t that going too far……? They didn’t even take any responsibility.”

“That employee is also rather impressive. She should know that they don’t care, but for her to try and take Jaim back anyway. Should I say that she’s that dedicated to her job……?”

“You have it rough as well, Jaro.”

As heads and cheeks were being scratched, sympathetic gazes were sent towards me. There were even fellows who went as far as to pat my shoulders as if they were wishing me luck. If it were a while back, then I would have unquestionably been annoyed by this, but I was able to, at the very least, genuinely accept this right now. I planned to take advantage of this, after all. Well, I also got used to this.

“But why did you bring her to your place?”

However, everyone immediately turned their heads the instant a single

person asked that question.

“Now that I think about it, he’s right. If she was sent here on a job, then she should have a place to stay.”

“The rumor about her going around looking for someone has been circulating for a while, so she should have been staying somewhere.”

“Jaro, that’s not right. You were finally able to make a home for newlyweds, but do you think Saeyeon would like it if you let the person who’s trying to take your daughter away stay in your home?”

“Yeah. Even if you’re trying to make her give up, if you bring someone like that over to your place, then even Jaim would get upset.”

“.....Sure, thank you for your concern in that regard.”

I was also used to these gazes. They’ll probably nag at me for a while now. Once I smiled bitterly, everyone started to leave by ones and twos.

“.....Huh?”

What’s up with them? Normally, these guys would harass me for things like this until morning assembly started. I blinked a couple of times before Nanda grinned and spoke.

“Everyone’s probably acting like that since they don’t think that it’d be right for them to force themselves into your family circumstances.”

“.....What vague consideration.”

“They’re good classmates, aren’t they? Of course, then even Saeyeon wouldn’t have received this sort of attention if they weren’t.”

Certainly, people like Saeyeon would normally be..... How should I say it? Usually, when there’s a kid who has flowers in their head in a class, then rather than being protected and the target of attention, they’re isolated. In truth, Saeyeon was also the target of bullying once. However, “I sometimes feel like these guys act like this because of Saeyeon.”

I occasionally wonder whether they were doting on Saeyeon because they were kind, or because they had no other choice but to do so since it was Saeyeon. Well, it didn’t matter either way. More importantly.

“.....Nevertheless, Nanda, I need you to be a bit more concerned as well. You’re the one person who Jaim is the most comfortable with.”

Nanda shrugged in response to my words which I had said while averting my gaze before speaking.

“I wonder about that. In any case, I see you’re also having a hard time, Jjaro.”

“By the way, did you come all the way here in the morning just to ask me that?”

“Oh, right. I almost forgot. Jjaro, did you see today’s lunch menu?”

Nanda seemed to have just now remembered his original reason for having come here.

“Do I look like someone who’d pay attention to something like that?”

“I figured. Look here.”

I received the folded piece of paper which had this month’s lunch menu printed on it from Nanda and looked at it. I then smacked my lips. I didn’t do this because today’s menu appeared appetizing.

“.....Certainly, this is a bit......”

“All the other kids are also trying to think up of a plan. So how about it?”

I looked around the classroom in response to Nanda’s words and noticed that my classmates were definitely gathered in groups of twos and threes and plotting something while looking at the lunch menu. I see. So this is why he’s here.

“You’re prepared, right? Shall we give it a go today as well?”

I passed the lunch menu back to Nanda and pushed my glasses up.

“All right. I’ll see you at lunch.”

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Shall I talk about the location and layout of this school for a moment?

I said this before, but our school is in the center of an apartment complex. The schoolyard is in an area where the path goes into the complex, and the school building is stretched out into an L-shape behind the schoolyard. On the left side of the school gate, there is a gym-cum-assembly hall which isn't used very often, and there's also a parking lot, a kitchen which distributes all of the food to the classrooms, and storage sheds behind the schoolyard and the school building. Behind those facilities, there is a flower garden and a wall that's about the height of the average person and more apartment complexes beyond that.

"Hey, hurry up. We'll get caught at this rate!"

"Then give me a better boost! Ack, why'd they put a barbed-wire fence down in a place like this?!"

In other words, if you can get over the wall, then you'll immediately be within an apartment complex, which means that you'll also be within a short walking distance from one of the shopping districts that are usually in every apartment complex. People who live close by could also just go home, and those who don't could go to a snack bar or a Chinese restaurant.

"You brats, I knew you kids would be here!"

"Damn it, a teacher is here! Run!"

"Wait! Let me down first……. Ah!"

"I'm sorry, comrade! Run!"

"How could you abandon your comrade and run away?! You cold-blooded bastards!"

“Yeah, you shouldn’t let those sort of fellows get away so easily. I’ll give you a deal that you can’t refuse. If you go to the teachers’ room and sell out the names of the guys that betrayed you, then I’ll buy you a bowl of jjajangmyeon.”

“Stir-fried please.”

Therefore, since people were aware of this, the wall is obviously tall and harsh. Even though students don’t jump the wall often during lunch and break time, it is constantly being watched by the teachers. However, despite that, there is no other particular way to escape from the school. The school gate is in plain sight from the teachers’ room, and the left and right sides are blocked by the gym and school building.

The wall behind the school. Point Delta-Bravo-Romeo. The wall that’s popularly known as the Wall of Wailing and the Barricade of the Cafeteria. The insurmountable wall of reality. I feel like I should mention that I’m the one who uses those three points when talking about the wall.

“.....It hasn’t even been 10 minutes since lunch break started and four teams have already been caught.”

“The teachers are also cruel. Even though they’ve been concealing themselves from the start, they come out acting as if they passed by just then and end up deceiving a bunch of the students.”

Nanda closed the curtain after peaking through the window a bit before turning to face me.

“How’re the preparations going?”

“I’m almost done. How’s the business?”

“The Really Exciting Delivery Service is attending to six teams as our customers today. We’re going to be busy.”

(TL note: They’re using their names as a pun for their ‘business’ name. Jin Jaro = Really, Shin Nanda = Exciting)

“Not bad. All right then, I’m ready.”

And since the ‘Creative Science’ club is using an unused storage shed as its clubroom, it is located right next to that Barricade of the Cafeteria. In other

words, a blind spot in the surveillance. By using this fact, Nanda and I have a business where we receive a slight labor fee and distribute delivery food within school grounds on days where the cafeteria food is bad. Please refer to me as a smuggler.

“Jjaro, the same mistake that happened last time won’t happen again, right?”

I sincerely admitted my mistake in response to Nanda’s doubt-filled gaze.

“The ‘Helibon Express’ that I used last time was defective. This, I admit.”

Making something fly over the wall wasn’t a good idea. It stuck out like a sore thumb and the food got caught on the barbed-wire fence last time while flying back over the wall, resulting in the food spilling and leaving behind undeniable evidence, and thanks to that, my contraption was taken apart by the teachers and we had to refund our customers. I can’t allow something like that to happen again.

“More than anything else, I have to make money……. I’m running low on funds…….”

In my current situation, even a few bucks are appreciated.

“I see you’ve completely become the head of a household now, Jjaro.”

I decided to ignore the chuckling Nanda.

“So, what kind of improvements did you make?”

“Even if the wall is tall, it’s still a wall. All we have to do is dig underneath it.”

I let out a ‘tadah’ and displayed my invention.

“It’s called ‘The Great Escape Special’! If it digs through the dirt with this drill and comes out the other side, then making deliveries through this device or even making hand deliveries will become possible through the hole that’s been dug!”

“Oh, it sounds like something that could work this time.”

“Of course. I’m the one who created it. Ah, don’t touch it. For some reason, the devices that you touch end up breaking easily.”

Nanda retracted his hand once he heard my words. I wonder if it’s because

this guy is still a part of the analog era, but I feel like there's some sort of magnetic field flowing around him.

"Isn't that mean? Ah, but Jjaro, if it's Jjaro, then you probably considered this already, but I want to ask you something anyway."

"What is it?"

Nanda pointing out a fault in one of my inventions was a rare sight to see. Nanda then asked a question while looking at 'The Great Escape Special'.

"Even if it may be easy to get through the dirt on our side since there's a flower garden, there's asphalt on the other side, isn't there? This drill can get through that, right?"

".....Ah."

Now that I think about it, I didn't consider that. Jjaro's mistake☆!

"It can, right?"

"O-Of course it can."

But I can't show my weak side here. It'd do me more harm than good if I had to start compensating people. Yeah, if it's my invention, then it should be possible. I have no other choice but to believe in it. Putting my hopes in it should be fine. I'm putting my faith in it.

Creak. The door opened.

"T-This is nothing! I simply made something to prepare the flower garden! F-Flowers are the symbol of peace!"

"What sort of boys love are the two of you performing in this dark and out-of-the-way clubroom?"

"Ah, what, it's just Upperclassman Nabom....."

Fortunately, the one to open the door and enter the clubroom was Upperclassman Nabom who looked more tired than usual. That scared me.

"Isn't that reaction a bit rude, Underclassman Jin Jaro? Ah, Underclassman Shin Nanda is here too. Have you been doing well?"

As if she had just now noticed that he was also here, Upperclassman Nabom

turned to look at Nanda and greeted him. Even though she exhibited a super fan-like personality to the point of crying last time, not only was she acting like usual, but she even appeared indifferent. As expected of a trained agent. Nanda responded with a grin.

“I’m taking the liberty of using your clubroom. How about you, Upperclassman Nabom? Since we’re acquaintances, we could offer you a cheaper price on our Really Exciting Smuggling Service.”

“I already had something to eat before coming here, so I’m fine. More importantly…….”

“Ah, Miss Ha Nabom! Is this where Master is?”

Once Upperclassman Nabom saw Jihye walk into the room as if it were the most obvious thing to do, she let out a small sigh and the corners of her tired eyes drooped down further.

“……Something troublesome followed me.”

“What…….”

My words weren’t cut off mid-sentence because I didn’t have anything more to say. It was because I had so many things to say that my throat became blocked like morning traffic.

Why was she here? Moreover, why did Upperclassman Nabom bring her here so easily? More than that, why do they look so close?

“Uhm, and she is……?”

Additionally, Nanda, who obviously had no way of knowing the situation, simply opened his eyes wide and stood up slowly. This was a natural reaction. Since a girl wearing a maid uniform, the same girl whom he previously heard was a real maid and was trying to take Jaim away, had personally come to see me in the clubroom.

“Ah, Master! You were here. Do you know how much I’ve been looking for you? No one seemed to know where you had gone, so if it weren’t for Miss Ha Nabom, I wouldn’t have been able to find you.”

However, since Jihye was a robot that was devoted to her goal, she

completely ignored Nanda and walked straight towards me.

“You, why……? Rather, what is that?”

I was going to hesitantly take a step back, but I felt more curious about the large box in her hands. As expected, I’m definitely a scientist. Rather than trying to figure out the situation first, my curiosity had a higher priority.

Jihye seemed to have become either delighted or confident because of my question as she raised the ends of her brows and smiled. There was an audible ‘thud’ as she placed the box on the table.

“It’s your packed lunch!”

“……What?”

Jihye let out a proud snort and continued.

“I heard from the Missus that Master eats ‘school meals’ which are not only lacking in nutritional value but also mass cooked and distributed in unsanitary hallways. Therefore, I cannot allow Master to eat such fodder-like food! On my way here, I saw that the expressions on the other students’ faces looked as if they were inmates receiving their rations in a prison.”

We have a proper dietitian. Apologize to the dietitian lady. The food is distributed hygienically as well. Apologize to the uncles who distribute the food. Well, I won’t deny the fact that it seems like fodder and prison rations, though.

“Thus, I personally prepared a packed lunch that’s nutritional, sanitary, and capable of satisfying Master’s splendid taste buds based off of saved data.”

A confident and proud expression. As far as I could tell, that expression meant that she wanted to be praised, so I ignored it and asked the most reasonable question that could be deducted from what I could currently see.

“Did no one say anything when you came here? No one tried to stop you?”

“Yes. I got lost on my way here, so when I asked the other students around me for directions, they answered me kindly, and when I explained my situation at the school gate, the security guard let me in. Although I was overflowing with the desire to chat with the students within the school grounds, I explained myself to them and came here immediately for Master’s sake. Ah, now that I

think about it, a certain teacher who looked like a gorilla told me to tell Master to come to the teachers' room after you finish eating. Something about wanting to talk to Master about something.”

“.....”

My migraine which was a chronic disease that I had developed recently made me grab my head. It wasn't only because of the last thing she had said.

This is really annoying. Doesn't this mean that the entire school body knows? Saeyeon and Jaim misunderstand already as well. Moreover, I even made up that excuse. I can't go around and give the same excuse to each and every student and teacher.

While I was gripping my head in pain as my brain cells performed Luddite Movement due to excessive stress, Nanda, who still had no way of knowing the situation, turned to look at me and asked a question.

“Uhm, Jjaro. She's definitely the person whom you said was trying to take Jaim away, right? Then why is she calling you Master and bringing you a packed lunch?”

“.....Sorry, give me a moment to organize my thoughts.”

I tried to quickly make up an excuse, but my headache was making it too difficult for me right now. While I was doing whatever I could to calm my brain cells, Jihye, while still completely oblivious, smiled towards Upperclassman Nabom.

“Still, it's a relief that Miss Ha Nabom was here! Thanks to her, I was able to find Master like this and she even explained everything to the other students for me! I was already grateful when she told me that the young lady had gone back in time when I initially filed the missing person report, but Miss Ha Nabom even volunteered to take the role of observer and keep an eye on the young lady this close!”

“.....I simply carried out what I had to do. So please let go of my hands.”

Before we knew it, Jihye was holding both of Upperclassman Nabom's hands and shaking them up and down. There were a lot of things that bothered me, but most importantly.

Just now, she definitely confessed that she traveled back in time, didn't she?

".....Jihye, you, I told you to not....."

"Ah, Mr. Shin Nanda? Are you really Mr. Shin Nanda? Master, I didn't know Mr. Shin Nanda was your acquaintance!"

However, before I could say anything more, Jihye turned away from Upperclassman Nabom as she released her hands before approaching Nanda this time. I didn't even have the chance to stop her. Jihye smiled brightly as she grabbed Nanda's hands and spoke.

"Miss Jaim is Mr. Shin Nanda's biggest fan! She has every single one of your albums, and she even went to your concert that was held in celebration of your 1 billionth sale and download of your new album! I went with her as well! Ah, that's right! Do you think that I could get your autograph? The young lady would be delighted."

".....I ordered you to not tell anyone yesterday!"

Jaim was startled by my shout, which I had cried out before my brain could judge that it was already too late, and turned to look at me with an incredibly surprised look on her face.

"Eh?! W-Why? M-Master only said to not tell the Missus yesterday, didn't you?!"

"Of course, I did say it like that, but do you have no flexibility?!"

"I'm a robot."

"Don't bring up the fact that you're a robot whenever it's convenient for you!"

"Uhm, Underclassman Jin Jaro, I don't think it's the time to be worrying about that."

I was able to collect myself thanks to Upperclassman Nabom's words. Ah, that's right. This wasn't the time to be contemplating about good methods for disassembling this tin can.

".....Future, huh....."

Once I turned my head, I saw that Nanda had his fist against his mouth and appeared as if he was thinking about something.

“Eh, well, Nanda, what she’s trying to say is…….”

However, Nanda smiled lightly in response to my cautious prodding.

“No, I already had a rough grasp of things. It was just surprising to hear it directly.”

……What?

My words involuntarily stopped and my mouth froze in place because of Nanda’s comment. Nanda nodded with a serious expression on his face before continuing.

“I had this hunch since a long time ago. That Jaim was your and Saeyeon’s daughter who came from the future, and that person……. Is it a bit iffy to call you that? She’s the robot maid that you said you were going to build, right, Jjaro?”

“……You had a hunch since a long time ago?”

“Wasn’t that the first thing you told me, Jjaro? That she’s your daughter who came here from the future.”

……Now that I think about it, I did say that, but he disregarded it back then.

“I also heard rumors about what the little lady had said in the teachers’ room. That she had come here to do something because Jjaro and Saeyeon fight in the future. Wait a second, doesn’t this mean that my dream of becoming a trot singer comes true? The scale of it doesn’t seem realistic, though.”

Yeah, when I was called to the teachers’ room with Jaim after that fight, she definitely said something like that. However, everyone thought that was simply nonsense and since I led everyone to believe that it really was, I thought that everyone would have forgotten it by now. Furthermore, even though this guy knows now, “I see……. Although reaching 1 billion album sales throughout the globe seems like a lie, the little lady admiring me was true…….”

Why was he acting so nonchalantly, as if he only felt a bit pleased?

“I have to do my best now, don’t I?”

“.....You.”

I’m not sure how he had interpreted my gaze, but Nanda came out of his thoughts, met my gaze, and nodded his head.

“Ah, don’t worry. I won’t tell anyone. If I tell anyone, then it would definitely make things difficult for you, Saeyeon, and the little lady.”

“No, that’s not..... Nevermind.”

I decided to simply let out a small sigh.

“Putting that aside, the future, huh? Isn’t that amazing? Like a time machine?”

“.....Well, that seems to be the case. I don’t know the exact details either.”

“And this person here, is a robot?”

“Ah, I haven’t introduced myself yet. I am the robot maid that’s currently attending to Miss Jin Jaim, XMR-MK.XXI ‘Eureka’. I would be grateful if you referred to me as ‘Jin Jihye’.”

Jihye courteously responded to Nanda’s question which he had asked while turning towards her.

“If it’s a robot maid, then isn’t that the thing that Jjaro said he was going to make?”

“Yes. Master created me.”

“Wow, you’re amazing as well, Jjaro. You achieve your dream as well, huh, Jjaro?”

Nanda grinned cheerfully in response to Jihye’s proud answer.

“Then doesn’t that mean you, Saeyeon, and I all achieve our dreams? Jjaro wanted to create robot maids, Jaim is here so that means Saeyeon becomes your wife, and I become a trot star. Wow, that’s great. Isn’t that a happy future?”

Without any deeper thought, Nanda was simply in awe by the thought of everyone living happily in the future. He was grinning as if he were truly happy.

“.....Uhm, Upperclassman Nabom, is this all right?”

So, furtively, while Jihye was approaching the marveling Nanda for an autograph, I moved closer to Upperclassman Nabom and prodded her. Upperclassman Nabom looked at me with tired eyes and let out a small sigh.

“Well, honestly speaking, I expected this to happen the instant I found her on school grounds. I have to make sure information about the future isn’t disclosed since I’m a secret agent, so this isn’t really a direction that I particularly wanted, though. In any case, that robot is tiring. I wonder if she’s malfunctioning somewhere.”

“You sound genuinely upset.”

“Things have become bothersome for me, so of course I would be.”

That doesn’t seem like the only reason. More importantly, how did a secret agent get found out by me so easily anyway? I didn’t say that out loud, but once I turned to look at Upperclassman Nabom, she looked as if she were pondering about something for a moment before noticing my gaze.

“Hm? What’s the matter, Underclassman Jin Jaro?”

“I was curious as to what you intended to do.”

“What do you mean?”

Do I really have to spell it out for her?

“Nanda isn’t the type of person to go around telling people, but not only did he find out about where Jaim came from, but he also found out about his future career. ……Also, I’m reporting this late, but she blabbered in front of Saeyeon yesterday as well.”

“Oh dear, does she also know that you two broke up?”

“I prevented her from going that far.”

“I see. The situation is gradually becoming more annoying.”

Upperclassman Nabom nodded. However, that’s all she did.

“……So hurry up and do something about it.”

“Pardon? Why are you telling me to do something?”

……Huh?

Upperclassman Nabom's attitude of tilting her head while blinking her tired eyes made me feel stifled, but I was interrupted the instant I opened my mouth.

"Upperclassman Nabom, did you already know?"

It seems his conversation with Jihye must have been over as Nanda approached with a smile on his face. Behind him, Jihye was happily holding up an A4 sheet of paper that had Nanda's autograph on it. Upperclassman Nabom smiled nonchalantly at Nanda, completely shifting over from our conversation.

"Well, I'm Underclassman Jin Jaro's one and only upperclassman. I heard about it a long time ago. I even gave him some pieces of advice."

I have no recollection of hearing any sort of proper advice from you. While I was grumbling to myself in my mind, Nanda turned to Jihye and asked.

"Uhm, what happens to Upperclassman Nabom in the future?"

He's talking more casually since he found out that she's a robot. Jihye smiled and answered.

"Huh? Ah, Miss Ha Nabom is a……. H-Hiik……."

"H-Hiik……."

I was the one who let out that last sound. It's because it's been a while since I last saw this. Killing intent that didn't seem possible with those half-closed and tired eyes.

"In the future, I'm?"

The smile that followed after those words made her appear three times more terrifying. Jihye, who was frightened by that gaze and trembling in fear, hesitantly avoided the gaze and spoke carefully.

"Uhm……. S-She's a business, woman……."

"Oh, a businesswoman, huh? I'm the only one who's normal. That's a bit vexing."

Fortunately, that seemed to be the right answer as Upperclassman Nabom went back to her normal mood and smiled.

"Yeah. It would have been great if Upperclassman Nabom made it big, too."

“That’s life. Not everyone can achieve their dreams. I’d be satisfied as long as I’m not unhappy.”

Upperclassman Nabom responded maturely as if it didn’t bother her too much.

So instead of saying something, I simply clutched my forehead. My migraine has been getting rather bad lately. At the sight of me even letting out a small groan, Jihye, who had been panicking since earlier, approached me carefully.

“Master, do you perhaps have a chronic disease? Do you have a bad headache? Are you all right? Should I call a doctor?”

“.....”

A short while ago, she panicked and trembled when I threatened to disassemble her, so now she paid attention and reacted to trivial actions like this.

More importantly, her somewhat ditzy, “my pace”, and reckless attitude made her similar to that girl.

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“Jjaro, is it true that Jihye made a packed lunch and brought it to you at school?”

“Uh, uuh…….”

Lunch break was over and I was back in class. That was the only response I could muster towards Saeyeon who had been pouting all weekend, including today, and had asked me that while being weirdly worked up.

“That’s going too far, Jin Jaro. How could you receive food from another woman?”

“Moreover, from the girl who’s trying to take away your daughter.”

“Don’t you think she’s doing that to curry your favor?”

“Do you like maids that much?”

And, in response to my answer, the untaught masses immediately sent in supporting fire while looking at me with amused eyes. When I got back after eating lunch, they were quiet, but they were holding back just for this moment, weren’t they?

Additionally, while this was happening, Saeyeon was contemplating with her hand over her mouth and with a serious gaze that didn’t suit her.

“I see…….”

“Saeyeon, let me explain…….”

“Jjaro!”

“Y-Yes, Ma’am!”

Saeyeon, who had turned her head so fiercely that I inadvertently used

honorifics, with even more serious eyes, questioned me in a way that felt like she was interrogating me.

“Did it taste good?”

“.....”

Wow, this is a terrifyingly hard question to answer.....

As I was aware that even Saeyeon harbored the emotion known as ‘jealousy’ after the previous incident, I knew that this was a situation that could incur a jealousy fiercer than before, but.....

After I was barely able to stop myself from scratching the back of my head because the untaught masses were all quiet and glaring at me as they waited for my answer, I cautiously did my best to decipher Saeyeon’s gaze and spoke.

“.....Uhm, i-it did taste good.....”

Lying wasn’t a part of my style. It did taste good. It didn’t have the same feeling that restaurant food had, but how should I say it, a homely and motherly taste? I’ve never experienced a motherly taste before, so I’m not exactly sure, but it was tasty in that regard.

“Wow, how could you say that it was good so frankly.....”

“I thought Jaro matured a bit, but this is disappointing.....”

“Saeyeon, you’re allowed to get upset right now!”

“Stop fanning the flames! I’ll resolve things myself!”

“What do you mean ‘resolve’? It’s too late, Jaro.”

“Saeyeon, get mad! Bite him! This is where you should settle it!”

Even if watching a fight is known to be the most enjoyable spectacle in the world, aren’t you guys going too far? Do you guys want to see a domestic dispute that badly? No, we aren’t really a couple, you know?

While I was arguing with the untaught masses who were enthusiastically fanning the flames, Saeyeon simply stayed still and continued to ponder about something.

“Uhm, Saeyeon, it’s not what you think.....”

Honestly, I wanted to say ‘she did that because she’s a robot maid.’, but since I couldn’t say that in a place like this, I decided to persuade her quietly. However, I felt a chill go down my spine the instant Saeyeon muttered something under her breath.

“I see……. Then I can’t just sit around and do nothing…….”

“C-Can’t sit around?”

And then, after school was over, once we got home, Saeyeon threw her bag to the side and stood in front of Jihye before shouting boldly.

“Miss Jihye, please teach me how to cook!”

“…….”

Honestly, I didn’t expect this at all, so my mouth was left agape.

As expected, Jihye also didn’t understand what was going on, so she paused for a moment before speaking.

“Uhm, Madam? Is something the matter?”

Saeyeon laughed faintly as if she were embarrassed.

“I mean, Mom and Jaim have been teaching me as well, but it’s really difficult……. Mom is usually busy, and learning from Jaim is a bit……. So I want to learn from Miss Jihye since you’re probably good at housework! I want to learn enough to at least be able to make a packed lunch for Jjaro!”

“Ah, so that’s the reason. I understand.”

You understood with only that much? More importantly, I see that Saeyeon is using formal speech. Even though the opposition is a robot.

“Then, since it’s about time to start preparing dinner, how about I start teaching you immediately, Madam?”

This girl adapts quickly. Should I say that her ability to nonchalantly agree to an abrupt request and suggest something immediately after is expected of a robot maid? Saeyeon smiled happily. No matter how much I looked at her, she didn’t seem to be jealous or have any emotions similar to it. I’m not sure if I should say that this was unexpected or expected.

“Ah, please wait a moment!”

And then Saeyeon **stripped**. I’m not joking.

“W-What are you doing?!”

“Hm? But Mom said that when you’re cooking for a boy, you have to be naked and have only an apron on…….”

What is that old lady teaching her daughter?

“You mustn’t do that, Madam!”

Jihye shouted towards Saeyeon who was still in the posture of taking off her school uniform and pointing towards an apron that had a cute drawing on the front side. With a resolute voice, at that.

“Substances such as oil and hot water could splash onto you while you’re cooking, and more importantly, it’s unsanitary due to the residual waste that exudes from the skin!”

Wow, so that’s what you’re going to nitpick. She wasn’t wrong, though. How thorough.

“I-I see……. But…….”

“Ah, was that a simple joke since Master is here?”

“Huh? A joke?”

“……?”

Jihye tilted her head slightly. I think I can guess what’s on her mind…….

“In any case, aprons prevent your clothes from getting dirty, so that’s a good choice. Please tell me when you’re ready. Since I was planning to make curry for the young lady today, we’ll start by cleaning the vegetables.”

“……I don’t like vegetables.”

Saeyeon pouted. Jihye spoke sternly.

“In order to properly balance the nutrition you consume, it’s best to eat all sorts of ingredients without reserve.”

“Jjaro said the same thing as well……. I’m ready.”

After fastening the apron, Saeyeon had a confident expression on her face. Jihye also nodded when she saw that face. It seems they were about to begin in earnest now.

“.....Uhm, by the way, are you going to keep watching, Jjaro?”

“Hm?”

Saeyeon asked that while slightly turning her head towards me. I was watching them while folding my arms on top of the dining table between the living room and the kitchen, but it seems something about that was bothering her.

“Ah, if you’re worried that I’ll start teasing you because you’re bad at cooking, then you don’t have to worry. Even I won’t make fun of someone who’s trying to learn.”

If you consider the fact that she didn’t ask me to teach her, then that’s probably what she’s worried about. That must have been the right answer as Saeyeon pursed her lips and turned her head away while letting out an audible ‘Hmph!’. Were you that worried about what I’d say?

“No, I don’t think that’s the issue.....”

I’m ignoring the robot’s opinion. It’s not like Saeyeon would be embarrassed about me watching her while she’s learning how to cook, something she’s always been bad at.

At any rate, I decided to watch Jihye’s cooking class for Saeyeon since I had nothing better to do. I was also worried about leaving these two by themselves.

“Wow, it has a pretty shape..... How did you do that?”

“Give it a try as well, Madam. I’ll assist you.”

“Then I’ll also give it a go..... I’ll try to cut it into a star shape.”

Anyway, I was worried that they wouldn’t get along since Saeyeon was still upset this morning, but they get along surprisingly well. The two prepared the curry for today’s dinner while matching each other’s pace fairly well. Well, for a beginner it’s an appropriate choice, but it really doesn’t suit a maid. Although it’s Jaim and Saeyeon’s favorite.

“By the way, Miss Jihye.”

“It’s fine if you don’t add an honorific. I’m a robot maid, after all. What is it?”

“No, but……. Am I doing well in the future?”

“Well, even I don’t……. Hiik?!”

Jihye, who was smiling brightly, froze in place.

“I mean, I’m just curious about how I’m doing in the future, whether I’m Jjaro’s wife and acting as a housewife, as I expected, working like Mom does, or doing something else. So?”

“Uhm, well, that’s, uhh…….”

“…….”

Jihye’s body had stiffened because I had pulled out a wrench from my tool belt and was tapping my hand with it while shaking my head. I spoke by only moving my lips.

I’ll break you apart, if you say anything.

“N-Needless to say, you’re doing well! Y-You’re living happily as a housewife while doing housework! Yup!”

“Is that so? Then that means I become good at doing housework in the future, huh?”

“N-Naturally! Yup! It goes without saying! You’re super great at it!”

“Then why did we get a robot maid?”

“……Eh?”

Saeyeon waved her hands once Jihye froze up.

“N-No! I’m not saying that Miss Jihye isn’t needed, I’m simply curious because you said that I’m good at housework in the future.”

“That’s……. Ah, b-because Master created me!”

“Ah, I see. Then I must be bored in the future. It wouldn’t seem right to take Miss Jihye’s work when it’s your job after all.”

Saeyeon nodded her head as if she understood with that. It didn’t seem like

she was particularly jealous or anything. Saeyeon pondered deeply for a moment before speaking while pressing her chin up with her fingers.

“Then does that mean I do night activities with Jjaro every day?”

“Kah, hu, cough, cough!”

My hasty shout got caught in my throat. As expected, Jihye must not have expected that question either as she froze up again.

“Uuh……. Eh? Pardon?”

“Mom told me before that she’s unable to do night activities because she’s busy. That she wants to hurry up and retire in order to do night activities, because if she does, then she might be able to make me a sibling even if there’s a large age gap. Ah, then does that mean Jjaro and I only had Jaim? It would be nice if Jaim also had a sibling…….”

“…….”

Saeyeon’s mother, I see you’ve said these sort of things to your daughter. More importantly, as I thought, you wanted another child, huh? While I was clutching my aching head because I had no idea who to blame, Jihye laughed awkwardly as she furtively backed away before pulling at my collar.

“Uhm, M-Master. Is the Missus perhaps frustrated?”

“……That’s troubling in its own way, but it’s probably closer to the thing that’s pinned to her hair.”

“It is a pretty flower pin, but what about it?”

“……Well, it’s becoming a dead language even now.”

“In any case, what should I do? That……. I-I’m gradually losing things to say!”

Yeah, I understand that feeling. It can’t be helped. I let out a determined sigh and approached Saeyeon.

“Saeyeon, should I help with the cooking as well?”

“H-Huh? N-No, you don’t have to! I’m good at cooking now!”

“……You’ve only been learning for 30 minutes.”

“S-Still, I’m good at cooking! It’s okay! Just stay there and look forward to it, Jjarro!”

It seems Jihye decided to give me supporting fire as well.

“I-I also believe that learning from more people would help a lot more for things like this! Master is also good at cooking! T-There’s nothing to be embarrassed about! No one is good from the start!”

“Yeah……. That might be the case, but…….”

Saeyeon was glancing at me hesitantly, so I simply rolled up my sleeves and stood next to her.

“Now then, it’s almost time for dinner, so let’s finish up here. While we’re at it, I’ll teach you how to properly make fried eggs since that’s what Jaim likes. It’d also go well on top of the curry as well.”

“O-Okay…….”

The situation must have made it hard for her to refuse since Saeyeon simply nodded her head carefully. Regardless of what the reason was, being taught how to cook by me must really be concerning for her, so she shouldn’t be able to say something weird if I’m here.

……Incidentally, this girl is seriously bad at cooking.

“Wait, don’t pour cooking oil in like that! Do you intend to make fried eggs?”

“But I don’t know how much adequate is, ow that’s hot!”

“Madam, are you all right? Ah, the fire!”

“Uah, it caught on fire! Lid! Where’s the lid!”

“T-There’s water here, Jjarro! Ei!”

“Don’t pour it! Uah hot hot hot hot!”

Well, even if you consider everything up till this point as trivial mistakes…….

“Oi, Ja Saeyeon. Why are you holding the sugar?”

“Because it feels like it might be tasty if it’s sweet?”

“Put down the sugar, that’s an order. Pick up the salt, that’s an order. Put

some in, that……. Don't dump it in!"

"T-Then, instead of sugar……."

"I told you to stop putting things in!"

Why does this girl like pouring things? More importantly, sugar and salt don't have an additive relationship, you know?

Like that, time went by.

"Finished! Jjaro, look look! The fried eggs are done!"

"……Yeah, that's great."

"……Master, what should I say in this sort of situation……?"

While Saeyeon was smiling brightly and holding out the plate, I barely succeeded in displaying a tired smile.

The yolk was popped, eggshells could be seen here and there, and it was 'deep-fried' to the point that it befitted being called 'fried', its outer appearance looked really high on cholesterol. It was surprising how there were some places that were burnt black even though she had poured so much oil in.

"Jjaro, have a taste!"

With eyes overflowing with expectations, Saeyeon held it out towards me.

"……N-No, you should taste it yourself……."

"But, I want Jjaro to be the first person to try my cooking……."

Saeyeon pouted in response to my hesitant reply and continued. But, this……. I mean…….

"Now then, aaah~≡"

"……."

What could I do? I shut my eyes and ate the piece that Saeyeon was holding out with her chopsticks.

"……!"

"So? Is it good?"

I was barely able to muster enough strength to nod my head at Saeyeon whose face was filled with hope. Tears fell down my cheek. A sticky sweetness and a tongue-piercing saltiness frolicked around in my mouth harmoniously. It was a taste that made every lingering attachment I had in the world disappear and forced me to look back at my life. What exactly have I done to Saeyeon?

“Thank you, Miss Jihye! It’s so tasty that it’s moved Jjaro to tears!”

“Y-Yes. T-That’s great, Madam!”

For her to be capable of smiling even with that troubled look on her face, this girl is rather impressive. Saeyeon, who giggled happily since it seems she took Jihye’s words as a compliment, spoke.

“Then, Miss Jihye, please continue to give me bride lessons!”

“.....Pardon?”

“You said that your specialty is housework, didn’t you, Miss Jihye? I want to also be good at cleaning and doing laundry, not just cooking! I’ll become a good wife in the future and help Jjaro by training now!”

“.....That, uhm.....”

Jihye turned to look at me with a face that looked like it was about to cry. I don’t have the energy to worry about your side at the moment. In the end, Jihye turned back towards Saeyeon and spoke.

“A-All right! If I can help, then I’ll do my best to teach you! For Master’s sake!”

“Okay! I’ll work hard so I can be helpful to Jjaro!”

.....Even though it’d be more helpful if the two of you just stayed still.

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“.....So something like that happened.”

Jaim’s face was filled with complaints as she said that.

“Mom should stop being embarrassed and just learn from me.....”

“Yeah. You could have taught her sooner.”

I seriously did my best not to throw everything back up in the bathroom. Even though I drank several glasses of water and brushed my teeth several times, the taste still remained in my mouth, so I constantly felt like puking.

During the nights when Saeyeon was already asleep, Jaim and I would occasionally spend time alone together. Don’t misunderstand this in some weird direction. I’m talking about Multi.

“While I was playing with Nanda Oppa, towards that piece of scrap metal, mom had.....”

Jaim, who had played with Nanda after school since he found out about everything, glared at me once I told her what happened and spoke.

“More importantly, even though you happily ate the lunch that that piece of scrap metal made, how could you show such a reaction to the cooking that mom did her best to make?”

“You’re only able to say that thanks to the fact that I ate everything.”

“The issue isn’t the taste! Haa, this is why mechanophiliacs are.....”

“I explained it to you several times already! I only intended to disassemble her and examine her structure, I didn’t have any ulterior motives. I do get excited about robots, but not in that sense! Furthermore, if you’re going to quibble over that, then you also made Jihye raise her skirt.”

“No. Your eyes were completely wicked at that moment, Dad. No matter how much I think about it, you had a gaze that looked like you were about to commit something. If the other person were a girl, then they would have been impregnated by your gaze alone.”

“Choose your words nicely, I beg of you. Ah, hand me the screwdriver over there.”

“Here.”

Without turning my head, I received the screwdriver held out by Jaim without even having to look at it. Although some people could see this as me ignoring her, more than that, it was because we got used to each other.

“In any case, since it seems like the misunderstanding with Saeyeon has been cleared and she’s going to get along with Jihye, you should stop being upset as well. She isn’t threatening us to take you back immediately, is she?

“That isn’t the problem. The very fact that that piece of scrap metal came looking for me is the thing that’s annoying me.”

As if the very thought of it made her more upset, Jaim forcefully pulled out the circuitry. You’re going to break it like that, kid.

“Moreover, you straightforwardly call her ‘Jihye’.”

“You have to properly call people by their names. Even if they’re a machine.”

“Even though you don’t say my name and only call me ‘kid’ and ‘brat’.”

She was definitely sulking. This wasn’t what I wanted.

“Dad, if you have the time to strip that sort of machine, then think more about uniting with Mom. How long do you intend to back away?”

I was wondering when she would bring this up again. It’s been a while.

“That’s not my concern. More importantly, have you still not given up on that whole uniting thing?”

“Obviously. If I do this part with certainty, then you and Mom won’t be able to split apart, right?”

Jaim looked at me with pitying eyes and continued.

“Of course, it might be fine if things continued like this since you’ve already been acknowledged as a family, but wouldn’t Mom be able to give birth to me faster if you and Mom properly unite together by even a day sooner? Let’s go with the fast family planning.”

“What are you saying so easily like pouring water into cup ramen?”

“You’ll probably be done in 3 minutes anyway, Dad. If you pour the water in, unite, and then eat the ramen together afterward, wouldn’t that be just the right amount of time for the noodles to cook?”

“Can you not choose your words better?”

“Ubububububu!”

Seriously, this cheeky kid. Where did she learn this from?

Once I let go of her stretched out cheeks, Jaim rubbed her red cheeks and spoke.

“Uu……. You’re going to do it one day anyway, so can’t you do it faster? Lines are meant to be crossed. You’re starting to become conscious of Mom as well, aren’t you, Dad?”

“Shut up! I’m not conscious of her! Why are you in such a rush anyway?”

“Oh, this is like you’re saying ‘I’m going to do it anyway, so why the hurry?’, right? Like when you’re about to study, but the instant you hear someone tell you to study, you don’t want to do it? I understand! I’ll be watching warmly, so…….”

“That’s right, I forgot that you enjoy being tormented by me! Let’s try dying once, you brat! You brat!”

“Ubububububububu?!”

If someone doesn’t understand even though they’ve already been warned, then punishment follows after.

After stretching her cheeks with more strength than before, I released them and let out a sigh as I watched Jaim groan in pain.

“More importantly, why don’t you want to go home?”

Jaim's expression contorted the instant I said those words.

".....Why? Are you going to chase me out again?"

"No, I'm not trying to chase you out or anything."

Well, I can't say that that idea is completely absent, but I didn't mean it like that.

"That, how should I say it? Certainly, there's the fact that Jihye came looking for you, there's your school, and there's also the fact that you have to be captured because you're here illegally, but she said they might let you go if you go back now, didn't she?"

"Hm, so you're worried about me?"

I turned my head away because I didn't like the way she was laughing slyly. I-I'm not particularly worried! I'm saying this because these things happened because of you!

"But I can't right now."

However, Jaim shook her head.

"Why not? You said so before, didn't you? That we'll be fine from now....."

"And on the same night when I started to believe that, 'that' happened."

"....."

I couldn't make any sort of retort, so I closed my mouth. It also felt like I was trying to chase her away. Jaim looked straight at me with her large eyes and spoke.

"Dad, be honest. You don't like Mom yet, do you?"

".....Well, yeah."

I didn't want to lie, so I nodded.

I still didn't see Saeyeon entirely as a girl, and I didn't intend to do what Jaim wanted and unite with her. I'm not a eunuch. I simply don't have that much interest in that field.

I don't hate Saeyeon anymore. Regardless, if someone were to ask if I liked

her, then that didn't seem right either. At the very least, it's probably different from the 'like' that Jaim wants.

"That's why I can't."

However, it didn't sound like Jaim was berating me.

"All you've done, Dad, is reconcile with Mom, there's still the chance that you'll either become twisted again, fight with her again, or start getting interested in another girl that's like a strange girl."

"What is 'another girl that's like a strange girl' supposed to be?"

"In any case, the 'Happy Family Planning' that I want is for Mom and Dad to love each other properly, become a family, give birth to me, and live happily together."

Jaim grinned as she saw me react to her words by smacking my lips.

"So, while properly helping you with your **family experiment**, I have to teach you that families are good and that you'll even get an adorable daughter like me as a bonus."

"Adorable daughter, my ass."

Jaim's brow drooped when she heard my grumbling, but I ignored it.

"At any rate, since Jihye is already here out of concern……."

Knock knock. My words were cut short by the knocking on the door.

"Excuse me."

"Is something the matter?"

It seems she took my words as permission to enter as Jihye opened the door and bowed courteously.

"Master, Miss, I've brought some late-night snacks."

There were two sandwich slices cut into an appealing shape placed on top of the platter that was held in Jihye's hand. A warm air and a scent of coffee emanated from the cups.

"Oh, thanks. I was starting to feel peckish. Let's continue after this."

Once I stopped what I was doing and cleared up some space, Jihye, with skilled movements, put down the sandwich and the cups.

“It’s good that you’re helping Master with his work, but don’t stay up for too long, Miss. You’re still growing.”

“.....”

Jaim simply turned away quickly in response to the smiling Jihye’s comment. She really doesn’t get along with her. She doesn’t look like she intends to get along with her either.

The nice and warm atmosphere instantly turned cold the moment Jihye entered the room. I don’t like this kind of atmosphere. What should I do?

“Then, if you will excuse me.”

“All right. You can leave now.”

I lightly waved my hand at Jihye who was bowing her head politely.

“Uhm, by the way, Master, may I ask a single question?”

“Hm? What is it now?”

Once I looked back at her, Jihye asked a question while looking at Multi’s parts that were spread across the table.

“Is this the famous Miss ‘Robot Maid MK.III Multi’?”

“..... ‘Miss’?”

Once I asked back about the unexpected modifier, Jihye spoke as if she were in awe.

“Yes. The very first robot maid that Master ever invented. This is my first time seeing it myself. Wow, so I originally looked like this, huh.....”

“Originally?”

What was she saying? Jihye looked at each and every part with a mystic gaze.

“I’m the prototype that Master created during the middle of your research. In other words, I heard that I’m the result of you continuously improving on Miss Multi.”

“.....You’re saying that this, becomes you?”

“That’s what I heard.”

Jihye nodded. I inadvertently ended up looking at Multi’s remains. You’re telling me that this robot vacuum cleaner with a head attached to it, becomes this absolutely perfect robot maid? Of course, I’m using the method of improving a little bit at a time and only copying and pasting the numbers, but this is just.....

“Scrap metal, you’re disturbing us, so can you leave?”

Both Jihye and I turned our heads towards the cold voice.

Jaim, who didn’t even touch the sandwich or the cup and was focusing solely on working on Multi, had said that. Jihye’s expression of awe slowly turned into a sad one once she heard those words.

“Hey, no matter how much you dislike her, isn’t that going too far?”

“.....She’s a robot anyway.”

No, she’s right, but.....

Jaim didn’t turn her head and simply focused on her work even when I scolded her.

“Ah, I-I’m sorry for the disturbance. I’ll take my leave.”

Jihye backed away with a vague smile on her face. It was probably because of this clear refusal. Mm. It’s hard to say anything. If I take Jihye’s side, then Jaim will get upset, and if I take Jaim’s side, then that would also make me rude. But this girl, I knew she had a bad personality, but isn’t she too outspoken of her hatred when it comes to Jihye? She isn’t like this towards Upperclassman Nabom.

“But, is the Miss also helping in the creation of Miss Multi?”

“Hm?”

Jihye hesitantly asked right before she left the room. I then suddenly thought of something. That’s right, wouldn’t she grow an attachment if Jaim also had a hand in creating her?

“Y-Yeah! Jaim is my assistant, after all! She’s like the co-developer!”

I glanced at Jaim while speaking, but she didn’t seem interested at all. A failure, huh?

“I see…….”

However, instead of Jaim, Jihye was the one who nodded and showed a reaction.

“Then, since the Miss is also involved in creating me, does that mean the Miss is also my master?”

“Eh?”

“…….”

Even Jaim reacted to that question by twitching. Although it was only for an instant. That’s right, isn’t it? If I’m the creator since I made her, then Jaim as well…….

But now that I think about it, isn’t this a time paradox in its own way?

Jihye spoke while smiling with a strangely warm atmosphere wrapped around her.

“Then does that mean I’m like Master and the Miss’ daughter?”

“W-What are you saying, you piece of scrap metal?!”

And it seems this wasn’t something that she could let slide as Jaim put down the wrench and shouted. Her face was red.

“…….”

I get where she’s coming from. If she’s the result of Jaim and my joint-research, then I understand that she could think that way, but how should I say it……? An immorality that I can’t possibly utter…….

“Stop saying weird things and get out!”

“Y-Yeah. It’s not like that! It’s just an **invention**, an invention!”

“That’s right, huh?”

Jihye chuckled and scratched her cheek in response to my correction. I

seriously have no idea what's going through this robot's head. Was this perhaps revenge against Jaim who's been ignoring her?

“Then, I’ll be taking my leave. Please create Miss Multi well.”

Returning back to her usual atmosphere, Jihye bowed politely and closed the door behind her as she left.

“Really, what is that piece of scrap metal thinking……?”

Jaim shook her head as if she were annoyed. I also let out a similar sigh. In any case, this was troubling. The fact that she would say things like that without any thought. I sort of understand why Jaim doesn't like her.

But, that girl's smile, it felt lonely for some reason.

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20XX-May-12th. Windy

Please circle
today's weather.



Miss Jihye taught me how to clean today. When I was about to copy what Mom does, Miss Jihye said that that wasn't a proper cleaning method and instructed me to copy her.

When I put on an apron, rubber gloves, a bandana, and a mask like I once saw in a book a long time ago, Miss Jihye had a troubled smile on her face for some reason. Jjaro let out a sigh while watching.

Miss Jihye's cleaning method is too tiresome. We dusted and wiped the floor a countless number of times and dusted the tops of shelves and bookcases with dusters and then wiped them clean with a wet towel. It felt like we were doing spring cleaning. But this is probably what housewives do on a day-to-day basis, so I have to watch her properly and learn.

When I was told to copy her and I dusted off the dust on a shelf, Jjaro's toy fell and something broke. I thought he wouldn't know because he had a lot of toys, but Jjaro screamed and cried for 30 minutes while hugging the toy before pulling my cheeks and scolding me for an hour.

Being a housewife is a hard job.

TL note: Long time no see. I'm going to keep this TL note short since I'll be putting up an update post immediately after this to give a brief explanation on my absence and what not. In any case, this was more of a casual chapter, as you can obviously tell by the chapter title "Daily life", so it didn't take me too long to translate. I don't know why, but the first few chapters were super long. This is only the third chapter and it nearly reaches the half-point of the volume.

Ah, I really hope my schedule frees up more. At any rate, I'll see you guys in the update post or the next chapter.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 4

4. Anxiety

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After school, at the ‘Creative Science’ clubroom.

While I was giving my periodic report, which I was still doing lately, to Upperclassman Nabom, I decided to ask a direct question.

“Can’t you take her back?”

“No.”

She answered without even a second of hesitation.

While leaning back into her chair and gathering her hands on top of her crossed legs, Upperclassman Nabom spoke in a posture that looked so carefree that it was annoying.

“In the case of XMR-MK. XXI ‘Eureka’, model name ‘Jin Jihye’, she has received permission as Miss Jaim’s temporary guardian, and even if that were not the case, since inorganic matter cannot be afflicted with information contamination, the bill regarding this has no lines in it that order us to punish or manage them. Therefore, I do not have the right to use force.”

“What an arbitrary law.”

“I’m not the one who made it, you know?”

As if this had nothing to do with her, Upperclassman Nabom answered with a tone that made her sound like a civil servant who had a lot of spare time as she uncrossed her legs and crossed it once more with the other leg on top this time.

“More importantly, that’s surprising. If it’s Underclassman Jin Jaro, then I expected you to be jumping with joy since a robot maid has appeared before you, a robot which you personally created, at that. I thought you would immediately strip her and shout ‘the right of first night, I’ll exercise my right of first night!’.”

“Didn’t I tell you to uninstall all of the surveillance cameras?”

“Oh dear, what do you mean by cameras? I have no idea what you could possibly be talking about.”

No idea, my ass. You look like you’re enjoying yourself. I’m getting another headache. Upperclassman Nabom smiled brightly as she continued.

“In the first place, how am I supposed to remove the cameras if I don’t go to Underclassman Jin Jaro’s place? On a side note, I knew very well that Underclassman Jin Jaro was a mechanophiliac, but I never would have expected you to truly toss aside your wife and strip a robot in order to unite with it.”

“If you’re going to say it like that, then how did you initially install them?”

“That’s classified information☆”

“.....”

It’s dangerous if this person says something like this. More importantly, don’t add things like ‘☆’ at the end of your sentence. It’s not cute with those sleepy eyes of yours.

“In that regard, I’m disappointed. I even prepared some popcorn, cola, and 3D glasses so that I could watch fruitily and record the abnormal sexuality of a mechanophiliac in order to upload it onto a certain T and P2P site, but do you not care about your audience? It felt like watching something because it was called ‘Animal Kingdom’, but it turned out to literally be about an animal

kingdom. How will you compensate me for this disappointment?”

“I’m seriously going to report you this time! You stalker!”

Upperclassman Nabom smiled and nodded as if she were satisfied by my rebuttal which I had shouted after having abruptly stood up. Seriously, why does this person like messing with me so much?

“That’s enough joking around. It’s honestly troubling for me as well.”

You’re one to talk. Well, she might actually be troubled.

The number of incidents which Jihye had caused within the past week didn’t end at just one or two occurrences. I don’t remember how many times she got lost while on an errand, despite telling me to leave the housekeeping to her. Furthermore, every time this happened, she would go around conversing with the people who approached her asking about her unique appearance and outfit, and due to the careless comments which she’d keep spitting out, I was also contacted by the police once about a missing child they had found. The policeman who I saw back during the incident with Jaim was there as well, so he suspected that I did something again.

“Why does she like gossiping so much. Even though she’s a robot. Do you know how hard it is to tell people that she has some loose screws in her head when she’s sharp when it comes to certain things?”

“I-I see, o-of all people, that person was…….”

“……Stop making that face that looks like you’re about to burst out laughing. This is serious.”

This might be sudden, but this person has a bad personality. I think I’m going to get upset.

“If she’s struggling because the satellite that manages her GPS functionality doesn’t exist right now, then she could memorize the roads…….”

In response to my grumbling, Upperclassman Nabom wiped away the tear that had formed because she was holding back her laughter and spoke.

“Well, in the future, a lot of redevelopment had occurred around this neighborhood, so it’s very different compared to the roads now.”

“Eh, seriously? Could I make a huge earning through real estate?!”

“.....For you to react like that in response to those words, as expected, you’re realistic. More importantly, isn’t that house your parents’?”

“They don’t care about it anyway, so it might as well be mine. They left behind the land registry certificate, too.”

Upperclassman Nabom looked as if she were lightly fed up by my answer.

“Well, you can do whatever you want with that. At any rate, you were able to deal with it reasonably well, so I’m also relieved. I already had to keep doing something I didn’t like doing because of Underclassman Jin Jaro, so it’s bothersome, but you at least took care of that much.”

Thanks to Upperclassman Nabom changing the topic, I was torn away from my happy thoughts.

“Now that I think about it, wasn’t it Upperclassman Nabom who told Jihye that Jaim was here?”

“Yes, it was me.”

“.....No, I’m not saying that you should admit it so easily.”

“The police contacted the Time Affairs Bureau, and since I’m the one in charge of the incident, I told her before I was dispatched here. Is that a problem?”

Upperclassman Nabom tilted her head as if she were sincerely asking me if there was a problem with that.

“No, it just felt like you two strangely got along.”

“It’s simply one-sided friendliness. Underclassman Jin Jaro should also know well about this sort of personality, correct?”

“Certainly.....”

Should I say that they’re really amiable or don’t think ahead? It’s because of these facts that, despite their weird appearance and speech style, everyone would either kindly show them the way or call my place.

However, to say that that was the only reason, something felt a bit off.....

“Well, hardship is the natural consequence of one’s deeds, so go through as many hardships as you want. As many as the number of written apologies I had to write last time.”

I snapped back at the smiling Upperclassman Nabom on reflex.

“What do you mean by natural consequences? It’s not my fault that Jaim and Jihye came here.”

“If you didn’t go on about that family experiment thing or whatever and allowed me to take the girl back once the problem was dealt with, then something like this wouldn’t have happened.”

“I couldn’t let you take her back in that situation. Do you have no blood or tears? Moreover, you’re the one who surrendered to my threat in the end.”

“Then you should convince Miss Jaim to go back to the future.”

My expression froze up in response to those words which she had said nonchalantly.

“.....How could I say something like that?”

“Of course, saying something like that would be cruel. It seems Underclassman Jin Jaro knows why Miss Jaim doesn’t want to go back, after all.”

In response to her expression and words that made it seem like she was looking at something pitiful, I simply turned away.

Naturally, I knew exactly why she didn’t want to go back. Because, **the future can’t be changed.**

During the previous incident, Upperclassman Nabom told me this clearly.

There are no time paradoxes.

This meant that no matter what happened here, it wouldn’t affect the future.

You could understand this if you thought about it a little.

At that time, if, by persuading Saeyeon, the future had changed because I had already experienced something which should have happened in the future, then Jaim wouldn’t have had a reason to come back to the past.

If this were true and Jaim didn't come back to the past, then my inner-most thoughts wouldn't have been exposed to Saeyeon. The fact that I hated her and arbitrarily made her stay like a young child.

And she would figure this out one day. Saeyeon isn't an idiot, after all.

In the end, a future where Saeyeon and I didn't split up and lived happily together, a future where we become the family that Jaim wanted, **didn't exist**.

Even if we continued like this, Saeyeon and I will most likely fight due to the same reason that Jaim remembers. The fact that the future hadn't contacted us yet proved this.

".....In any case, please do something."

So I had no other choice but to say that.

I couldn't think of a reason no matter how much I thought about it. After that had happened, there's no way that I would say something like that again, and since this was something that Saeyeon was already told once, I couldn't think of a reason why she would get shocked and leave the house. However, despite that. If that's the case, then.....

"Heading home now?"

Upperclassman Nabom asked me that as I stood up from my chair. I grabbed my backpack and nodded.

"Saeyeon is probably waiting for me anyway, and it's also late."

"I see. Then I hope you get home safely."

Upperclassman Nabom smiled as she said that.

However, today, that smile felt.....

".....Are you not going home, Upperclassman Nabom? It's late."

A long time had passed since school had ended. Our school, which was attuned to the current era and got rid of late-night studying, was devoid of all other students already. Upperclassman Nabom and I were probably the only students left on school grounds right now.

Upperclassman Nabom let out a troubled laugh.

“There’s nothing to do even if I go home, after all.”

Upperclassman Nabom’s smile looked somewhat lonely as she said that.

“So being here is more comfortable. Don’t worry about me and go back to the home where your family is waiting.”

Normally, those last words would have sounded like she was teasing me, but.

Now that I think about it, I’ve never seen Upperclassman Nabom go home before me. Always by herself, she remained in this clubroom until the very end.

And naturally, I could guess what the reason behind that was.

Yeah. At the very least, there were people that both Jaim and Jihye know in this era. They came here because they had a goal, someone they wanted to meet.

However, how would it be like for Upperclassman Nabom? She was dispatched to this unfamiliar place and had also lost her chance to go back due to my insistence.

This place where she knew no one and had nothing to do.

“.....I’m sorry.”

So, when I inadvertently let out an apology, Upperclassman Nabom responded with her usual mischievous grin.

“Well, certainly, since Underclassman Jin Jaro only took the product and didn’t keep your promise to let me enjoy this current age, you should be sorry.”

“.....I’m sincerely sorry.”

“.....I’ll be troubled if you respond to my joke so seriously.”

Upperclassman Nabom scratched her cheek while smiling awkwardly.

“Then go home and contemplate more about Miss Jaim and Jihye. Ah, give my regards to Underclassman Ja Saeyeon as well.”

She was probably telling me to not worry about it with those teasing words of hers.

Thus, I stepped through the open door and turned my head slightly.

“Uhm, the next periodic report, how about we do it at a cafe?”

“.....I see. That sounds good. I’ll be looking forward to it.”

In the end, I turned around at the last moment.

Different from earlier, Upperclassman Nabom was simply smiling normally as she spoke.

“Let’s also come to a compromise by going to another place afterward.”

Being left by herself, and while receiving the sunset flowing through the window with her back,

Upperclassman Nabom gently waved her hand.

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The sky turned amber as the sun went down.

At the school gate that looked forlorn because all of the students had already gone home, Saeyeon was leaning against the gate and staring vacantly at the sky. There was a lonesome expression, which she normally didn't show, on her face. I paused for a moment the instant I saw her.

Because, it had been a long time since I last saw Saeyeon like this.

On an empty street side. A time by herself. A lonely gaze.

Whenever she was alone, she would show this side of hers at times.

"Saeyeon."

So each time she did, I would always call out to her by her name.

"Ah, Jjaro!"

A bright smile would then appear on Saeyeon's face as she turned to look at me.

Always for only a single moment, she would do this after briefly lowering her brows as if she found something regrettable.

"Let's go home. I'm done for the day here."

Once I said that while adjusting the position of my backpack, Saeyeon gave her usual goofy smile as she turned to talk to me.

"You weren't cheating with Big Sis Nabom, were you?"

"I told you several times already that that's not the case."

She linked her arm with mine and, instead of her usual jealous or envious expression, she gazed up at me with a face that had a pure smile on it and

looked as if she were teasing me.

“In any case, let’s go home. Where’s Jaim?”

I’m pretty sure she came to school today. Saeyeon answered happily.

“Jaim said that waiting is boring, so she went to play with some of her friends at the playground.”

My mouth unintentionally fell open because of that response.

“.....That kid, has friends?”

This was a bit surprising. Saeyeon giggled at my question.

“Of course she does. There’s no way that someone as kind as Jaim wouldn’t have friends, right?”

“No, that doesn’t seem right.”

Although the modifiers ‘cute’, ‘cheeky’, and ‘rude’ suited her, a ‘kind’ kid wasn’t something that I could agree with.

“More importantly, is that okay.....?”

Once I muttered those words because of a sudden concern that came to mind, Saeyeon asked.

“The fact that Jaim has to go back since she’s from the future?”

“.....Well, yeah, that.”

Seriously, she’s sharp when it comes to these sort of weird things.

Jaim obviously isn’t from this time period. Therefore, that meant that even if it’s not by Jihye’s hands, she’ll have to go back. She can’t stay here forever.

Furthermore, even if this weren’t an issue, if Jaim is Saeyeon and my daughter, then that would make the elementary school students, who’re currently her ‘friends’, at least ten years older than her. Age may not matter between friends, but what did Jaim think about this? Was she even thinking about it?

“I think it’ll be all right.”

Regardless, Saeyeon spoke with a tone that sounded as if things will truly be

all right.

“Of course, they might get lonely when Jaim goes back, but she didn’t have any friends who were the same age as her when she got here. I think it’s better like this. She might come back to play later on as well.”

“.....I wonder.”

I admit that we can’t be the only people that Jaim plays with. She’ll get bored, and even if there’s a generation difference, she’ll probably be able to get along with her peers better.

“How about inviting Jaim’s friends over next time?”

“Don’t tell them anything weird.”

“Eh? Why not? If they know that Jaim is from the future, then wouldn’t they be less sad when they eventually split apart?”

“If you want to make Jaim lose all of her friends, then you can do that.”

It’s already hard enough since Jihye goes around saying things unnecessarily.

Saeyeon and I talked leisurely as we walked home on a sparsely populated road.

Now that I think about it, it’s been a long time since we last went home together like this with just the two of us. We used to always do this since elementary school, but we stopped doing so as of late. Ever since Jaim arrived, we either went home as a trio, or the two girls would go off to play somewhere while I went home by myself.

“In any case, my friend said.....”

While latched onto my arm, Saeyeon talked while beaming happily. I felt like she would start sulking if I told her to stop linking her arm with mine, so I simply looked away slightly and stayed silent.

This light weight, which also felt as if she were leaning onto me with her entire being, the soft touch of her chest, and most importantly, this warm sensation which was hotter than the hot weather. These sensations actually not feeling that bad was a secret.

I furtively cast a side-glance at her face so that she couldn't notice.

As I expected, this girl is really like a painting.

Flowing hair that had changed color due to the color of the setting sun. An unceasing smile that looked as if she was enjoying this moment to the utmost. Did her cheeks appear slightly flushed because of the setting sun, or.....?

"Hm? What's wrong, Jjaro?"

She peered up at me with blinking eyes, so I quickly looked forward.

If we continue along this path which we always commuted on, the playground where I had had a talk with 'Eureka' would come into view. The two of us would frequently play there when we were in preschool and elementary school.

Additionally, Jaim was at that playground right now. The kid was playing with other girls whom I assume were her friends and kids who seemed to be younger than her. So this girl had this side to her as well, huh? Should I say that it's as expected of an elementary schooler? I unintentionally let out a chuckle.

"Jaim~!"

Saeyeon cupped her hands around her mouth and called out to Jaim. Jaim, who was playing in the sand, reacted to her voice by turning towards it.

"Ah, Mom! I have to go now, Heyeong! I'll see you later!"

Are you going to ignore me, brat?

Jaim gave her friends a wave, dusted the dirt off of her clothes, and ran over to us. It felt like her friends were tilting their heads because of the gap between the person who she called 'Mom' and the fact that the person was wearing a school uniform, but I decided to pretend as if I didn't notice.

The sight of Jaim being embraced by Saeyeon and Saeyeon patting Jaim's back. As I thought, these two got along well.

"Really, you're playing with kids, huh? Was it fun?"

Once I said that in a teasing tone while smirking, different from my expectation, Jaim looked up at me and smiled brightly. Huh?

"Is there a problem with an elementary schooler playing like an elementary

schooler?”

I definitely expected her to bite back, but she looks calm. This was surprising.

It seems my thoughts were written all over my face as Jaim gazed at me with an expression that looked as if she were looking down at me. This brat.

“I also graduated from things like that. I’m mature, after all.”

“Even if you say that, you’re still develop……. Ow!”

Did this brat just step on my foot?”

“Hmph! You lack manners, Dad!”

Once I raised my head, Jaim had already run off a fair distance and was pulling down one of her lower eyelids and sticking her tongue out at me. Trying to act cute, huh?

“Jaim, we’re already here at the playground, so do you want to play for a bit before we go?”

“Really? Yay, you’re the best, Mom!”

“It’s also been a long time since we played at a playground together, right, Jjaro?”

Saeyeon turned slightly towards me and smiled. We did play together frequently during preschool, but there’s no reason for you to be this excited, is there? You’re a high school student now.

“Then let’s ride on the seesaw together, Mom! Also…… ahk.”

Jaim, who had been moving further away from me, happily started to come back to us in response to Saeyeon’s suggestion, but her face stiffened and she distanced herself again once she saw my face.

“……Jjaro, you aren’t allowed to scold Jaim, okay? Even if Jaim stepped on your foot, you’re the one who said something bad first, Jjaro.”

I ended up inadvertently nodding my head once I noticed Saeyeon was glaring at me intensely. Saeyeon has also been starting to behave more strictly lately.

“Dad won’t scold you, Jaim! Play with us Jjaro, okay? How about pushing Jaim on the swing?”

“Can I send her flying like last time? ……I’m sorry.”

It was just a joke. You don’t have to glare at me so seriously.

Saeyeon and Jaim happily went to the playground while holding hands.

“What are you doing, Jjaro? Hurry up and come with us!”

“Fine, I’m on my way now.”

The fact that I was used to this reaction and sight, felt somewhat weird.

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The instant I exited the bathroom with a clean feeling after having finished my shower and giving myself a scalp massage, I was startled by a bloodcurdling scream which forced me to cover my ears.

“Kya! Kya! W-What are you doing?!”

“W-Why’d you scream all of a sudden? You scared me.”

Once I complained towards the source of the screaming, Jaim, who was sitting on the sofa and watching TV, covered her eyes and shouted.

“I’m asking why you’re dressed like that! What are you trying to show to your daughter?!”

“You expect me to come out in a tuxedo when I just took a shower?”

I was wondering what the issue was.

“Then at least wear a tracksuit! You used to wear one a while ago, but why did you start wearing only a t-shirt and briefs?!”

“Spring is ending. If it gets warmer, then a person’s attire changes as well…….”

Yeah……. It’s going to be summer soon. It’ll probably get hotter. Spring is over as well, huh. The realization is making me emotional. The green grass and beautiful flowers dancing in the spring breeze, clothes getting shorter. I wonder what the spring, which had gone by, had left behind for me. What did it change……?

“Ahk?!”

While I was looking in the distance with a melancholic gaze, something flew at my face so I caught it. What is this……? This brat……!”

“You’re throwing things?! You’re throwing things at me? You’re going to dirtily throw pants at someone?!”

“Your appearance is what’s dirty, Dad! Don’t go around while dangling something weird! Two girls live in this house!”

“Hoo……. Sure, my large caliber cannon definitely shakes because it’s huge…….”

“Don’t look down with a proud look on your face! Kya! Mom! Mooom!”

If you don’t want to see it, then look away.

“I’m wearing what I want in my house, what’s the problem? If you have any complaints, then go around like this as well.”

“What are you saying?! Do you want to see your daughter naked that much? You perverted dad! I’m going to report you! Clink clink, Dad!”

“What’s ‘clink clink’ supposed to be? Also, the pervert is the masochist who likes getting span-, kuah!”

A cushion hit my face before I could even finish my sentence. Even a fluffy cushion was capable of hurting quite a bit. It got me square on the chin. Literally a clean hit. A critical hit occurring where I bit my tongue in the middle of my sentence was an additional effect.

“Kuuuh……. I let you go last time, kid, but this time……!”

“Master.”

However, the instant I was about to shout at the kid, Jihye appeared right in front of me. She was holding a well-laundered training outfit in her hands, in other words, a tracksuit.

(TL note: Tracksuits are called ‘training’ in Korea. I’m not exactly sure where it originates from.)

“Even if the weather has become warmer, you may catch a cold if you go around like that. It may be a bit uncomfortable, but how about wearing clothes?”

She spoke in a respectful tone which I could feel her concern in.

“.....I won’t catch a cold because of something like this.”

Therefore, I had no other choice but to receive the clothes and grumble to myself as I put it on. It felt a bit weird putting it on while being watched, but it should probably be fine since it’s just a robot and my daughter.

“......”

But Jaim quickly turned her head away with a sour look on her face. I put some clothes on like she wanted, but what was the problem now?

“Then since I’m done with my shower, it’s time for some fun.”

Once I said those words while grinning, Jaim’s expression looked a bit less annoyed.

“What, you want to get destroyed today as well?”

Her smirk looked as if she were both mocking and teasing me. Don’t expect me to constantly be on the short end of the stick, brat. Today is the day.....!

“Ack, that constriction, you, at that moment, aah!”

“Hehe, what’s this? You’re giving up with just this? The time for fun hasn’t even started yet, you know?”

However, different from me who was desperate, Jaim was speaking leisurely.

“Damn it, ah, no, aaaah!”

The technician’s technique sequence continued. Even if I did my best to endure and endure the continuous offensive, I was gradually running out of strength.

Even though, I have to show, the matureness of an adult, the splendor of an experienced man here! But, why?! Today as well!

“Kuuh..... I lost.....!”

After Jaim saw me lose strength and drop my head, she shrugged her shoulders as if I were pitiful and spoke.

“Dad, it’s too soon. Did you really put your all into this?”

“Shut up! Your constriction is just too strong!”

“Naturally, I’ll do whatever I can to win. I’m on the line to victory, father.”

I simply gnashed my teeth while I glared at Jaim who was grinning broadly as she joked around. What’s up with that parody? It sounds cool.

On the TV screen, my character was splayed out on the ground after having been enthusiastically beaten up and there was a simple message which read ‘2P WIN’ floating in the center of the screen.

“Isn’t an infinite wall combo at that timing going a bit too far?”

“Aren’t constrictions normally the key to fighting games? Walls were made for them.”

Lately, playing games with Jaim like this after a shower had become a routine.

It first started because I wanted to beat this brat up in a game. This was because, ever since we started to live together, Saeyeon would always scold me whenever I tried to whack the kid upside the head. So I planned to obtain a vicarious satisfaction through an expedient method.

Jaim enjoyed playing games, I enjoyed playing games, but Saeyeon didn’t, so I didn’t really have anyone to face against until now. I always played by myself against computer-controlled opponents, so I believed that I could beat her black and blue since I was rather confident in my ability.

“In the first place, you’re too weak at keeping yourself in check and psychological warfare, Dad. You always go on the offensive, so it’s easy to see through you, and I can immediately win if I counterattack by cornering you.”

“Don’t people say that the best defense is the best offense? Your method is like a little girl’s method.”

“I am a little girl. It’s because you think like that, that you haven’t won a single round.”

“Kuh…….”

“So, are you going to stop here? Surrendering today as well?”

“Of course not! Today is the day I’ll end this history of indignity!”

“Uhm, Miss? You should stop there for today.”

However, following my shout, Jihye, who was standing at the side, spoke while facing Jaim. Jihye smiled gently.

“You already played a lot today. Regardless of the fact that you’re playing this sort of violent game, the promised time is going to soon…….”

“Dad, what are you doing? Hurry up and choose.”

Without even turning her head, Jaim spoke while facing the screen.

“Uh, okay…….”

It bothered me vaguely, but I started to move the analog stick on my controller due to Jaim’s urging. The characters were selected and the fight started once more. Saeyeon, who was watching us from the sofa, started to cheer with a smiling face.

“Jjaro, do your best!”

“Mom, are you on Dad’s side?”

“D-Do your best as well, Jaim!”

“You’re on Jaim’s side?”

“G-Good luck to both of you!”

Well, that was a cheer that didn’t go towards either side.

Moreover, after receiving Saeyeon’s encouragement, I obviously…….

“Why……. Why can’t I win……?”



This kid definitely came from the future, right? Then this game right now should be a super old-school game to her. Even if this series had continued until her time, the techniques and timing should have changed, right? Then why is it that I, the person who should be used to this, the person who has lived longer, the person who has played games longer, why am I being beaten this senselessly?

“Hoo……. No matter how many times I hear it, it always feels great hearing the cries of the defeated.”

Also, more importantly, this brat, has she never thought about losing for her dad’s sake? Wouldn’t deliberately making a mistake and purposely losing at times like this not only be the correct pattern but also be the correct attitude which a daughter should have?

“Damn it, one more round! Let’s do another round!”

“Don’t you get tired of losing……? Ah, Mom, how about playing a match as well?”

“Huh? But I don’t know how to play games that well and……. Fighting games are a bit…….”

“It’s fine. I’ll help you. Dad is really weak, so Mom should definitely be able to win as well!”

“Hey, I’m not that weak!”

At the very least, I’m not bad enough to lose to Saeyeon! Jaim smirked at my cry. She went over to Saeyeon who was sitting on the sofa and handed her the controller.

“Now then, Mom, try one round. I’ll teach you, so…….”

“You cannot.”

However, in that instant, the TV screen went black and the words ‘NO SIGNAL’ appeared.

“Huh? Hey!”

Because Jihye had abruptly turned the game console off.

“An hour has already passed since you’ve started playing. I clearly told you that you can only play games for one hour a day, right? If you play any longer, then your eyesight will most likely deteriorate.”

Stern words and an attentive expression. Jaim simply responded by glaring at Jihye in silence.

After a brief pause, Saeyeon spoke towards Jaim carefully as if she were trying to comfort her.

“Uhm, Jaim. You played a lot today, so let’s play again tomorrow. I’ll try playing a match tomorrow as well. You’ll help me, right, Jaim?”

“.....”

Jaim put down the controller once she heard those words. Almost as if she were throwing it. Since she had put some strength into her toss, the controller made a dull ‘bang’ as it collided against the floor. I let out a sigh and organized both the controllers and the game console before putting them into a cabinet.

“.....Then I’m going to sleep first.”

“Hm? You’re not going to sleep with me?”

Saeyeon asked that as she watched Jaim stand up. There are a lot of rooms in the house, so Jaim has her own room, but she would normally sleep with Saeyeon. More importantly, it’s not that late yet, you know?

Jaim glanced towards Jihye as if she were displeased before shaking her head and heading towards her room. It seems she was really upset. I should say something to Jihye later.

“Uhm, Miss. May I say something?”

However, without even reading the mood, Jihye obliviously spoke towards Jaim’s back. Jaim turned only her head back halfway.

“.....What?”

“A week has already passed since my arrival here. How about going back home now?”

“Ah…….”

I unintentionally ended up grabbing my head. Why would you say that? Especially at that timing.

And, naturally, with an expression that looked as if she had reached her boiling point, Jaim glared at Jihye and shouted at her.

“I told you clearly last time, didn’t I? I don’t intend to go back, and my home is here! If you want to go back so badly, then go back on your own, you piece of scrap metal!”

“No, Miss, your home isn’t here, but…….”

“I’m not going back to **that sort of house!**”

While clenching her fist, Jaim shouted as loudly as she could.

“……Jaim?”

Needless to say, Saeyeon looked quizzical once she heard those words. Jaim must have noticed Saeyeon’s gaze as well as she spoke in a panic.

“I-It’s nothing, Mom! It’s……. I-I have to do homework if I go back!”

“I see……. Does Jjaro make you study a lot?”

“I-I even go to a cram school. In any case, I’m going to bed.”

Jaim smiled as she gave that evasive answer. Saeyeon also smiled as if she understood, but no matter how I looked at her, that expression…….

“……Goodnight, Mom.”

Jaim furtively avoided her gaze and, after glaring at Jihye once, she closed the door. Thud, some emotion could be heard from the sound of the door closing. Jihye turned towards me with a concerned look.

“Did the Miss, perhaps, start going through puberty?”

“No, from start to finish, it’s all your doing.”

“Did I say something wrong?”

Jihye tilted her head as if she sincerely didn’t know what the issue was. She must have really been trying to figure it out as she muttered to herself while

placing her hand against her mouth.

“But, she used to listen to me so well before she ran away from home……. For that kind and gentle Miss to be like this now…….”

Are you telling me that she treated her like that in the future as well? Then Jaim’s distaste was reasonable. No, rather than that.

“……Her personality wasn’t originally like this?”

There’s no way. There’s absolutely no way that was true. Nevertheless, Jihye nodded.

“In the future, she was a well-behaved young lady who listened to me well…….”

While I was vacantly staring at Jihye because of the unbelievable words I had just heard, Saeyeon carefully tapped on my shoulder so I turned to look at her.

“Uhm, Jjaro, is Jaim perhaps……. In the future, do we not get along? Now that I think about it, Jaim ran away from home, didn’t she……?”

An anxious gaze. A worried look. The ends of her fingers wavered as if she were asking for my help.

“……No, it’s not like that.”

So I had no other choice but to say that.

No matter what happens, I didn’t want to tell Saeyeon.

Even if it’s a future that cannot be avoided, even if the ‘house’ that Jaim came from won’t change, even if Saeyeon wasn’t in that home, At the very least, Saeyeon mustn’t know about that future.

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20XX-May-20th Gloomy.....

Please circle
today's weather.



Today, like we planned last time, I teamed up with Jaim and played the fighting game with Jjaro.

Even though I prefer games where you can play together with others more than fighting games.

Like the time we played monopoly when we were little.

It's a fighting game, but why are there pretty female characters?

I'm not really sure, but since they're better than the scary uncle characters, I chose one of them.

Jjaro smirked saying that I wouldn't even be a challenge. I didn't know what did what because

there were a lot of buttons, but when I pressed a bunch of them randomly, I beat Jjaro. Jjaro

said it was a fluke and kept wanting rematches, but I kept winning.

When I joked saying that I might actually be good at playing games, Jaim was happy and

praised me, but Jjaro kept mumbling that this was ridiculous and went to his room. It seems

losing to me must have really gotten to him. I should go easy on him next time.

TL note: Another week, another chapter. This chapter wasn't too long, but it took me a while because I'm still trying to sort myself out. I was able to concentrate better while working on this chapter, compared to the last few, but it wasn't at a level I was satisfied with yet. I'm still on hold for the project thing, so I'm just drifting along for now.

Additionally, the following chapters are probably going to be frustrating again, in a way somewhat similar to volume 1, so keep that in mind. This series is entirely about character development and how the characters continue to grow, so don't get too annoyed. I'm aware that there are a lot of you guys who probably won't get that peeved, but I also know that there are plenty of delicate flowers out there who quit reading without finishing a volume simply because they lacked the patience to reach the end. Believe me, I still receive comments on volume 2 of Dungeon Defense from people who think they can see through everything and announce that they're dropping the series, despite having only read half of the volume, because the MC was acting dumb. They never reach the final chapter of volume 2.

Well, I doubt the effectiveness of this note since there are so many people who just skip these TL notes anyway, but I figured I might as well mention it.

In any case, I'll see you guys in the next chapter.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 5

TL note: I apologize for how long this chapter took. Not only is this 19k+ words, but there's been a heatwave in Korea for the past several weeks which made it incredibly difficult for me to concentrate at all. I may also be absent for the next few days since some pipes burst underneath my house, so I have to keep watch while the plumbers work, and my father got hospitalized this Monday cause he apparently lost 22kg in a short period of time and he's become incredibly skinny. Thus I'll most likely be going to see him in the hospital in the evenings.

5. Parents

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A few days had passed.

“Hm? Is no one home?”

Once school was over and I had returned home, I noticed that no one else was home, which was a rare occurrence.

“W-Welcome home, Master.”

Jihye must have heard my voice as she came all the way out to the front door in order to greet me. It was a bit abrupt, but being welcomed home by a maid like this wasn't that bad……. I've always wanted to be welcomed home like this at least once……. But.

“Where are Saeyeon and Jaim? Did they go out to play?”

Jihye answered while courteously receiving my school blazer and backpack from me.

“No, the Madam's mother came by earlier and went out with the two of them.”

“Saeyeon's mom came over?”

Now that I think about it, she hasn't dropped by lately. Did her work end early today?

“Yes. She told me to pass a message on to Master. Today, the two ladies of this house and the Missus' mother are going to have a girls-only pajama party at

the home of the Missus' mother and spend the night there, so Master shouldn't come looking for them and sleep by yourself today."

"A pajama party, huh……."

In this day and age? And even though she's an old lady……. No, is it because she's an old lady that she's doing this? More importantly, there's something I should ask first.

"You didn't say anything unnecessary, right?"

"Really, Master. Do I look like someone who would?"

Jihye answered as if she were complaining. I'm asking her that because she does look like someone who would. Rather, she has gotten really used to being around me now.

"Even though you prittle-prattled last time."

"Uu……."

Around the middle of last week, Jihye went out saying that she was going to buy groceries for dinner, but as expected, she got lost and ended up wandering around the neighborhood's marketplace. And, the person who got caught within Jihye's radar as she used her sociability to latch onto every single person she saw in order to ask for directions, was Saeyeon's mom who was buying groceries on her way home from work.

Saeyeon's mom heard that the place Jihye was trying to get to was my house, so I was seriously surprised when they both arrived together. Thankfully, Jihye told me that she didn't say anything particular and only gave her the fabricated story that I had made, but after that, whenever I saw Saeyeon's mom talk to me with an incomprehensible smile on her face, I couldn't help but think that Jihye had said something.

"I-I really didn't say anything this time."

"‘This time’? Then that means you really did say something unnecessary last time."

"……Ah! N-No, I didn't say anything then either!"

Jihye waved her hands frantically once she realized she got caught in a leading

question. I decided to just let out a sigh. Seriously, even if this girl wasn't the one to slip up, there was also a high chance that Saeyeon would say something weird as well. It would be great if Jaim could handle that side, but due to recent events, it's somewhat hard to trust in her as well.....

"Well, it should be fine..... Saeyeon's mom didn't say anything weird, right?"

"She didn't say anything in particular. She simply said that Master should, at the very least, use this opportunity to get some proper rest today."

"I see..... Then should I think of today as a vacation?"

It's true that I wasn't able to have that much time to myself for the past two months. I should relax and enjoy my free time today. I changed out of my school uniform and sat comfortably on the sofa. Mhm, this is nice.

"....."

Though, the presence of a certain someone, who was watching me with a smile on her face while also standing slightly to the side of the sofa with her hands gathered in front of her, was bothering me. Maids might actually be a fairly bothersome existence.

".....What? Is there something you want to say?"

"No. Is there anything you may need, Master?"

Jihye spoke while beaming brightly.

"I'll call for you if I need something, so you can go relax as well."

".....Understood."

Jihye bowed her head modestly. She faintly looked as if she was disappointed. As expected of a robot maid. Did she get bored if she had no work to do?

".....Mm."

Additionally, I was also bored. Since I was just lazily sitting down and both Jihye and I weren't talking, I could only hear the sound of the clock ticking.

"All right, let's watch some TV."

I unintentionally spoke to myself as I messed with the remote. Watching TV was the best option whenever you didn't have anything to do.

However, the only programs that were currently airing were the uninteresting ones that only old people watched. Naturally, right now was around that time of day for these types of programs.

“Should I do the laundry that I’ve been putting on hold…….”

“I already did the laundry and dried them.”

“……Cleaning…….”

“I made sure that there isn’t even a single speck of dust left in the house.”

“…….”

As expected of a robot maid. She works hard. More importantly, for me to attempt to do housework just because I’m bored. The spirit of a homemaker must really be embedded into my bones now. I sat back down from the awkward posture I had because I was about to stand up.

“…….”

No. I couldn’t calm down for some reason.

Two months ago, this was definitely the norm. But for some reason, this situation where I couldn’t hear anything other than the discouraging sound of the TV made me bored and prevented me from calming down.

“……Yeah. In times like this, I should be true to my duties as a scientist.”

The fact that I was even talking to myself simply in order to make some noise felt incredibly awkward. Even though talking to yourself was a scientist’s privilege.

Still, I’ll most likely calm down if I’m together with my lover, my life, science.

Yup, definitely. I stood up and turned towards Jihye as I spoke.

“I’ll be in my room, so don’t come in unless I call for you. Okay?”

“Yes. I understand.”

I headed to my room after nodding at Jihye’s response.

The instant I opened the door, lying on top of my desk, Multi’s main body and parts, which Jaim and I were making improvements on together last night,

entered my line of sight. I felt a bit calmer. Yeah, it's also been a while since I last worked on something by myself.

After sitting down in front of my desk and cracking my fingers, I went to work while following the plans and blueprints that I had made beforehand.

My recent goal was to attach legs onto Multi's body. Although the likes of legs were nothing more than decorations to me, they were actually the most vital part.

The hardest part of creating a robot maid was the legs, in other words, bipedalism. The act of 'walking on two legs' was actually an incredibly complicated task. Not only does the robot maid have to maintain its balance while supporting itself on one leg and stepping forward with its other leg, but it has to consider a whole bunch of other things such as the state of the surface, the resulting angular change between the foot and the surface, and much more.

However, this was absolutely necessary for robot maids. Human society was thoroughly created for bipedal humans, which meant the usage of stairs. Wheels aren't capable of using stairs. They can't move across steep surfaces or terrains with random drops. If robot maids have legs, then they can move around here and there and, besides doing only housework, they can go out and do things like go on errands. That's what robot maids are, and that was one of the reasons why I wanted to make a humanoid robot.

I may be Jin Jaro, the greatest scientist of this era, but this wasn't an easy task. The many studies carried out at numerous research institutes weren't perfect even though they were being funded with hundreds of millions of dollars, so expecting a notable outcome from me when I'm carrying out this research by myself would be greedy.

Nevertheless, I'm not going to give up. Because I have assurance. Because a robot maid, which was supposedly invented by me and was capable of walking and thinking like a human was before me. Let's work hard.

While keeping my gaze fixated on Multi, I stuck my hand out.

"Hey, brat, hand me that hex key over there……."

……I'm an idiot.

Even though I knew no one was there.

I curled and uncurled my hand, which I had stretched out for no reason, before standing up and walking over to pick up the wrench that was within arms reach of the chair which Jaim always sat in before sitting back down.

Certainly, it might not only be Jaim who got used to this lifestyle.

Even though I should have been used to this sort of solitude, in merely two months.

In a house with no one else. Time spent by myself. Even though I was so accustomed to the fact of being alone, spending my time by myself, if anything, this was a natural thing ever since I was little. But why now?

I wound up inadvertently looking at the wall. I could hear a faint sound.

The sound of everyone laughing and chatting next door, at Saeyeon's place.

A sound that was cordial enough to penetrate the wall. Different from this completely silent house, the sound over there had a warmth that was the complete opposite of here.

Even though I was that envious of this sound.

Even though I hated this sound that much.

Why do I feel like this now?

".....Haa."

Looking at Multi sitting on top of my desk made me sigh.

Yeah, I had forgotten this recently. The reason why I wanted to create a robot maid. It was so that I wouldn't feel like this.

"....."

".....So why are you standing there?"

There's been a constant gaze on the back of my head. Once I turned around, I saw Jihye opening the door slightly and peaking into the room slightly. She realized she got caught and quickly shook her hands.

"I-It's nothing! I-I was just wondering if you really didn't need anything....."

“.....Haa.”

All I could do was let out a sigh. Jihye brought her hands together with a clap and spoke.

“That’s right! Master, are you hungry? I’ve prepared dinner!”

“Come here.”

Jihye looked at me with nervous eyes the instant I gestured with my finger at her to come to me.

“A-Are you going to dismantle me if I come in?”

“I won’t, so come here.”

“Really? You aren’t lying, right? If the Missus sees you trying to dismantle me, then she might misunderstand again.....”

“I’ll dismantle you if you don’t come here.”

“I-I’m in!”

Jihye frantically entered the room and closed the door behind her before I could even finish my sentence. I tapped on the chair that Jaim would always sit in. Jihye seemed to have understood that I was telling her to sit down as she took the seat rather restlessly.

“You don’t have to be so nervous. I keep my word, after all.”

“Of course, Master is definitely that type of person, but.....”

“It’s just that I’ve had some things I’ve been wanting to ask you in private.”

“Something to ask me?”

Jihye, who was squirming around in her seat, changed her expression into a surprised one once she heard my words and raised her head. Is this girl really a robot?

“How do you, Jaim, and I spend our time in the future?”

“Huh? Why are you asking that all of a sudden?”

Jihye tilted her head in confusion, uncertain as to what my intention was behind that question. It seems I’ll have to elaborate a bit.

“I want to know why Jaim dislikes you so much.”

“.....”

“Honestly, I didn’t even know that you were present in Jaim’s home.”

Jihye’s face became a bit darker once she heard those words.

Honestly speaking, I have my assumptions, so asking her this might be cruel. Even if she’s a robot, it would be cruel to anyone that’s capable of showing this sort of human-like response.

Regardless, I wanted to know what this girl’s thoughts were on this matter.

Moreover, I had the right to know. As her master and Jaim’s, well, her dad.

“I wonder……. I told you before, but the Miss didn’t show this sort of spiteful behavior towards me in the future.”

With a sullen look on her face, Jihye spoke while pondering.

“Of course, I may have treated the Miss a bit strictly. Like the time I turned the game console off.”

“Even I think that was going a bit too far.”

“But I didn’t do those kinds of things with malicious intent or because I wanted to hurt the Miss. Since future Master trusted me and left the Miss in my hands, I wanted to do my best to raise the Miss correctly.”

Although it seems Jihye became more depressed in response to my words, she was able to say that.

“Master is busy in various ways.”

Jihye looked straight at me and continued.

“You’re constantly busy because of your work at your company and you’re always devoting yourself to your research and development, the latter didn’t change even after you were fired.”

……It still hurts when I hear that I was fired.

Jihye must not have seen my bitter smile as she continued.

“Master, who declared that you would create the perfect robot maid and

devoted yourself to your work without coming back home, trusted in me to take care of Miss Jaim. Of course, you didn't particularly ask me to do this or anything, but you ordered me to handle the housework and do whatever I can so that nothing happens to the Miss."

".....So the future me was showing concern in his own way."

"He most likely did."

A speculation. It was an assumption.

"Jaim told me before that I would never come home and that I practically lived at the research lab."

"Yes, it is as she said. I actually haven't seen you in person that much either."

"You haven't seen me much?"

Jihye nodded in response to my question and spoke.

"You handled your board and lodging at either the research lab or the company, and you also didn't really like it when I came to see you in person. But I understand. Master has an important mission after all. A noble goal to take humanity a step forward."

Jihye spoke as if she were humbled.

"That's why, in order to let you focus on your work, I did whatever I could to be of assistance to you, Master. The Miss must have understood this as well since she used to listen to me well. When she was little, she would follow me around as if I were her big sister or mother..... Although she doesn't even speak to me properly nowadays."

Jihye's expression became sullen again as she said that.

"I thought that this was because I was lacking, but..... As long as Master wasn't around, I tried to do my best as her **family**."

".....Future me sure is impressive."

Jihye smiled happily at my words that were close to being self-deprecating.

"Yup! Master is amazing!"

No, even if you smile like that at this moment....."

I couldn't possibly say something towards that happy smile which looked as if she had just been praised, that smile, which I felt like I had, seen before.

"In any case, I have a vague grasp of things now. Please continue to look after Jaim."

So, in response to my words which I had said while turning away, Jihye blinked once before smiling brightly.

".....Yes. Since I have been given a formal request now, I'll do my best."

"Then you can head out now. I'm starting to get hungry, so you can start preparing dinner now."

"Uhm..... Master?"

Jihye responded hesitantly to me.

"Right now, you're trying to make Miss Multi walk on two legs, right?"

"Well, yeah. This is harder than it looks."

I attached legs and a walking system in my own way so I could do a trial and error, but regardless of whether it could walk properly or not, its appearance.....

"I see..... Then, if that's the case....."

What's up with her now? Jihye squirmed around shyly before an expression of resolve appeared on her face and she nodded her head.

"Then, it's embarrassing to say, but....."

With a cautious voice, Jihye hesitantly grabbed the ends of her skirt and raised it slightly.

"If needed, you can, dismantle me, only a little bit, though....."

"What? But, you....."

Didn't you hate being dismantled? Jihye's cheek became slightly red at my question and spoke.

"If it means that I could be of assistance to Master....."

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“.....Then, I’m really going to, okay?”

“P-Please be gentle.....”

Jihye turned her head away out of embarrassment. Why was she acting so shyly? Even though she’s a robot. It’s making me feel awkward as well.

Jihye hesitantly sat down on the chair and stuck her foot out towards me. I knelt down in front of her and carefully grabbed her extended foot.

I undid her garter belt and started to pull down her stocking.

“W-Wait a second!”

“.....As I thought, should I stop?”

Once I stopped moving my hands, which were in the midst of pulling down her stocking, Jihye’s mouth opened and closed as if she were about to say something hesitantly.

“N-No..... I-If I can be helpful, to Master.....”

“.....Then I’m taking it off completely.”

“Ah, auu.....”

Once I finished taking her stocking off completely, skin as pearly white as a Greek sculpture and a foot that was shaped aesthetically perfectly were revealed. A snowy field that contrasted the black stocking. It was quite literally a work of art.

“Uu.....”

Her five lovely toes wiggled and this sensation of her calf and thigh, which were so slick and smooth that they almost felt slippery, made it hard to believe

that they belonged to a robot. I poked it out of curiosity which resulted in Jihye letting out a sound and moving her leg a little. It felt as if I were touching human skin.

“How is it like this?”

“That’s……. It’s specially processed silicon. It’s capable of regenerating on its own, and, in order to provide ease of access to the interior for repairs, if you touch that spot…….”

Once I followed Jihye’s instruction and pushed down on the area slightly below her knee, the cover came off. This was most likely meant for maintenance purposes. An internal frame was revealed underneath the opened slide. This may be slightly grotesque, but…….

“P-Please don’t look so carefully.”

It must have been embarrassing as Jihye covered her face with her hands and shook her head.

If the exterior had a human, sculpture-like beauty, then the interior had a beauty unique to well-crafted machinery. Honestly, I felt reluctant due to her outer appearance, but I decided to endure it for my research.

“……How is it? Do you understand it a little?”

Jihye must have been similarly embarrassed as she kept hesitating and continued to sneak glances at me. Even while feeling that gaze, I carefully dismantled her with the mental attitude of definitely putting her back together afterward.

However, I’m really the one who made this, huh? I don’t know why, but it felt this way.

This complicated composition which my current self couldn’t understand or even grasp properly, however, even though I was moving my hands before letting my head think, it seemed to be right. I could clearly see my habits and aesthetics contained within this.

An internal frame that acted as the bones. Artificial muscles that made the leg move. Wires that sent electrical signals. The joint regions of the ankle and knee.

“Uhm, Master?”

While I was taking them apart one by one with delicate movements, Jihye opened her mouth. I responded to her while working.

“What. Ah, don’t move. You might mess something up if you do.”

“What do you think I have to do in order to convince the Miss to go back to the future?”

“That again……? Do you want to go back that badly?”

Once I said that with a small sigh, Jihye started swinging her other leg, the one I wasn’t working on, back and forth and spoke.

“Rather than wanting to go back……. It doesn’t feel right leaving the house empty for so long and I’m worried about the Miss. I also feel like she might be getting too used to being here.”

“That may be the case.”

Jihye spoke concededly after I gave her a nod

“Of course, it’s not like I’m completely clueless as to why the Miss ran away from home and doesn’t want to return. The Missus is here and Master is here as well, so, this may be the case, but…….”

As if she were worried, as if she were sulking, she simply swung her one leg with a vague look on her face.

“Still……. The more she does, when the Miss eventually goes back…….”

“…….”

I fully understood what she was trying to say even if she didn’t finish her sentence.

Saeyeon is here. She isn’t in the future.

I spend time with her here. I don’t in the future.

Similar to how I became accustomed to this ‘family experiment’, so the time I usually spent alone now feels awkward to me, the loneliness which Jaim will feel when she goes back will grow more immense the longer she stays here.

As expected of a robot maid, she's worried about Jaim's well-being.

"That name, 'Jihye', who gave it to you? Did I name you that?"

Jihye answered shyly to my question which I had asked in order to change the topic.

".....Uhm, no. Actually, I gave myself this name......"

".....You did?"

"Yes. I did so while referencing Master and Miss' names. Normally, robot maids are either referred to by their model name or their masters give them a nickname, but....."

Jihye must have been feeling sheepish as she chuckled and scratched her cheek. I was wondering where that skewed name had come from.

More importantly, does that mean I didn't even give her a name? Why not?

"Now that I think about it, Master, are you on friendly terms with Mr. Shin Nanda?"

"Why are you asking that all of a sudden?"

That was really random. Jihye smiled as if she were in awe and spoke.

"I didn't know that Mr. Shin Nanda was Master's friend. Albeit, there was no reason for you to tell me."

".....Well, we are on friendly terms."

Jihye stopped swinging her leg once I responded. It seems she didn't notice my brief pause.

"Then, Master, do you think you could ask Mr. Shin Nanda to spend time with the Miss during the weekend?"

I couldn't figure out what she was getting at, so I stopped my hands and looked up at her.

"The Miss is Mr. Shin Nanda's fan, so I feel like she would be delighted if the two of them could go play somewhere. It might make for a good memory as well."

“.....Well, she certainly does like him.”

Until now, she would only play with Nanda during the short period of time she had after school. Her eyes sparkled whenever she saw him and she went on cloud nine when we went to a karaoke room together, so she'll probably leap for joy if I tell her to play with him during the weekend.

“But didn't you say that you were worried that Jaim was getting too accustomed to being here? Wouldn't she want to go back even less?”

“That may be so, but..... Even if it stays like this, it doesn't feel like she'd want to go back either way. So wouldn't it be better if she had an enjoyable time instead?”

She moved her brows as she pondered, but her eyes and mouth were smiling as if she was happy as long as Jaim was happy. Your words and actions don't match, girl.

Regardless, even that expression, I feel like I've seen it before.....

“.....I'm putting you back together now. Stay still.”

“Are you fine with this? Was I helpful?”

“I realized that I don't understand anything, so that's at least an outcome.”

The technology of the future was profound and mysterious. This was on a different level from the time I took that portable game console apart.

I held onto Jihye's foot carefully as I started to reassemble the parts that I had dismantled. My hands moved as if I had made her myself. Jihye was silently watching me with awe on her face. Naturally, it was probably intriguing since this was the same as watching herself be made.

“Are you uncomfortable anywhere?”

Once I finished and asked that after snapping my fingers, Jihye tried moving her knee and toes one at a time.

Her small and lovely toes moved up and down. She rotated her slim ankle and bobbed her foot up and down. Her elegant calf moved in accordance with the movement of her convex knee.

“No, there’s no problem. You were truly able to dismantle and reassemble me, huh?”

Jihye was smiling brightly as if she were amazed, no, as if I had fixed something that had been a problem for her.

Because of that smile, I ended up blurting out a question.

“You, are you really a robot?”

“What are you saying when you just took me apart a second ago?”

Jihye giggled as if I had said something weird. Naturally, it would seem that way.

“When did you say I made you?”

“Pardon? Why do you ask?”

Unable to grasp the intention behind my question, a puzzled look appeared on Jihye’s face. However, she at least answered my question.

“It was after Master parted ways with the Missus. I knew her name, but I only met her in person for the first time after I had come here.”

“.....I see.”

Should I say that it was as I expected?

“So I’ve been looking after Miss Jaim ever since she was little.”

Jihye spoke in a longing voice.

“I still have the data. When Master created me at the research lab and first introduced me to the Miss, she stared at me and asked who I was, so when I explained that I would be taking care of her from then on, she looked up at me with her large eyes without a word.”

“.....”

“Master had told the Miss that from that day forth, I would be looking after her like her **mom**, so she should obediently listen to me. The Miss asked where her mom had gone, but Master didn’t answer that.”

Jihye spoke shyly while putting her stocking, the one which I had stripped off

earlier, back on and attaching it to her garter belt.

“Honestly, it’s because I knew that the Miss yearned for her mother that I can understand why she had come here, and also the reason why she doesn’t want to go back. But still, since I intended to look after the Miss in my own way as a mother would, it’s a bit saddening.”

“……I see.”

I diligently tried to control my facial expression as I smacked my lips and spoke to Jihye.

“In any case, can you prepare dinner now? I’m going to have to eat by myself today, after all, so you can go recharge early today once you’re done.”

Although it’s possible for Jihye to consume food and digest it, she doesn’t obtain energy from doing so. She’s able to somewhat manage with her oxygen to hydrogen fuel cell, but she has to recharge her battery through her built-in cable at night. It may seem a bit sudden, but I’m worried about our electricity bill. Cumulative tax is scary.

In order to be more efficient while recharging, she powers down while only leaving on the least amount of systems she could. Until now, she would usually recharge after Saeyeon, Jaim, and I went to sleep, but since I was by myself today, I decided to let her rest a little. Even robots require rest after all. For their durability and metal fatigue.

“I understand. Uhm…….”

“Fine. I’ll ask Nanda tomorrow.”

“Really? Thank you very much!”

Jihye’s face instantly brightened up the instant I consented.

“Then I’ll prepare dinner immediately! Please wait a moment!”

Jihye hastily left the room, shutting the door behind her. Silence returned once I was left by myself in the room again. Even the sound of chatting coming through the wall from Saeyeon’s place.

……It’s probably because of that.

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“Oh, it’s been a long time since you came to visit me. What’s up?”

Break time. Once I went all the way to Nanda’s class, he spoke while chuckling. It definitely has been a long time since I last came looking for him first. This might actually be the first time I did so since we entered our second year of high school and were put into different classes.

“Hey, it’s that guy.”

“The guy who has an elementary school kid for a daughter?”

“He promised a slightly lacking girl that they’d only sleep while holding hands and forcefully…….”

……So these rumors were still going around outside of our class.

I decided to simply ignore the untaught masses who started talking noisily the instant I entered the classroom. On a side note, I’m going to remember the face of that last guy. I put your name on my purge list. Be careful when you walk around at night.

“Nothing much, there’s just a favor that I want to ask of you.”

“A favor? Is it perhaps about Jaim?”

……He’s incredibly straightforward. More importantly, it sounds like he already knows. Nanda displayed a troubled smile as he scratched the back of his head.

“Ah, I didn’t expect you to go out of your way to look for me. Still, it would be troubling if there were any misunderstandings. Jaim is thinking like that, but I’m not particularly thinking like that, so you don’t have to come…….”

“What are you talking about?”

Nanda was talking by himself as if he were embarrassed despite the fact that I haven't said anything yet. Nanda blinked at my response.

"Huh? Didn't you come here because I promised to go on a date with Jaim this weekend?"

".....What?"

The hell is he talking about? No wait, it's similar to the reason why I came here.

"A date? With that brat?"

"Like I said, I don't think of it as a date, but it seems Jaim wants to think it is."

Nanda chuckled awkwardly. However, for some reason, there were clear signs of him being happy written all over his face. Nanda continued as if he were trying to give me an excuse.

"A few days ago, Jaim called me on the phone at night and asked me if I was free this weekend and if I could go on a date with her. Calling it a date would be a bit weird, so I asked if we could just say that we're going to hang out together, but..... Jjaro, where are you going?"

"Dirty..... Lolicon..... Pedo..... I'm going to report you....."

It was only natural for one's aversion to also take form in the actual physical space between two people. I understood now. The reason why this guy wasn't interested in other girls and would always brush off confessions, despite the fact that he was popular with girls, was because he was a sexual deviant who liked little kids..... I'm definitely going to report you.....

Nanda shouted after he saw that I was gradually distancing myself from him.

"I told you it's not like that! I'm not trying to ignore Jaim's feelings, but I don't plan to steal your daughter away from you either."

His choice of words itself was dangerous. Although Nanda smiled pleasantly and waved his hands as if it really weren't the case, without erasing my suspicion, I asked him a question while staring at him.

"You aren't thinking of something weird because you heard that Jaim is your fan in the future, right?"

Certainly, if it's this guy, then Jaim would fall to his feet, and he could use her affection since hers is so high towards him, or, if he isn't interested in little kids, then he could raise her before snatching her away. Now that I think about it, a long time ago, he definitely said that Jaim would grow up to resemble her mom and become curvy, right?

"Hahaha."

However, Nanda let out an audible laugh in response to my words.

"What are you laughing about?"

You're going to laugh in a situation like this? Is he trying to say something like 'It can't be helped since I've already been caught'? But the smile on his face doesn't.....

How should I say it, it looked gleeful.

Nanda grinned at my questioning gaze.

"No, it's just that you've also changed quite a lot, Jjarro. Are you that worried about Jaim?"

".....Not particularly."

I had no other choice but to turn away in response to his words and because of the way he was looking at me.

"In any case, if that isn't what you wanted to ask, then what's the favor? Tell me."

"....."

Having to say something like this in this situation is awkward, but what else can I do? I let out a small sigh and spoke while averting my gaze.

"It's, a similar goal, but....."

"A similar goal?"

"I mean, mm, should I say it's a part of making memories for Jaim? Well, it's sort of like that....."

"What, so it's the same thing in the end."

“It’s different, okay? It’s completely different! I’m not asking you a favor with that dangerous idea you had in mind, but to at least give Jaim a good memory…….”

“Yeah, in the end, you’re asking that because you’re worried, aren’t you?”

Nanda simply laughed and responded like that the instant I shouted at him in a fit of rage. This guy, seriously…….

“I know what you’re thinking, Jjarō. You told me the reason why Jihye is here, so you figured that it wouldn’t be so bad for Jaim to make some good memories with her favorite singer before she has to go back, right? Well, something along those lines.”

Nanda grinned as if he saw through me completely, and as if he were telling me to not worry.

His attitude that made it seem like he would listen to any favor I had without any ulterior motive, it made me think that right now was the only chance that I would ever get to say this.

However, it was more embarrassing to say something like this. But still,

“……Shin Nanda.”

Nanda nodded at me.

“Uhm……. It’s a bit weird for me to say something like this now of all times, but…….”

“What is it, Jjarō? What are you trying to say all of a sudden?”

His usual, never-changing pleasant smile. Although his words made me feel like it would be better to keep it hidden, it then made me much more resolved to say it.

“Do you consider me as your friend?”

“Of course you’re my friend.”

“……All right. Thanks.”

I expected Nanda would respond like this, but I ended up turning away and clenching my teeth tightly in response to his answer.

“But, I…….”

“I know. You never considered me as your friend, right?”

“……Huh?”

What did he say just now……?

I could only open my eyes wide and stare at Nanda. How? Nanda smirked and shrugged his shoulder at my reaction.

“Jaro, it was the same earlier as well, but your thoughts appear too clearly on your face. Honestly, it’s like on the level of an elementary school student.”

I thought I’d been hiding it well until now. I believed that if I didn’t say anything, then I would have been able to hide it until that awaited day.

“Then why?”

My words came out before my thoughts. Nanda grinned at me.

“Being someone’s friend doesn’t mean you have to agree with each other, sign and seal a contract, and shout ‘We’re friends from now on!’, right? It’s embarrassing just imagining it.”

“No, that’s not what…….”

“Jaro, no matter what you think about me, I consider you to be a good friend. Well, your personality is honestly a bit of a mess, but that’s been getting better lately.”

A good friend, huh…….

Nanda also smiled vaguely once he saw my bitter smile.

“I know. I know that you probably hate this side of me. You also disliked Saeyeon for a similar reason, right? You hate good people. You’re way too twisted.”

“You’re calling yourself a good person?”

“It’s the truth, isn’t it?”

……The fact that he could say something like this nonchalantly and not be taken as offensive or boasting was probably one of this guy’s strong points.

“In any case, it’s embarrassing. ‘Do you consider me as your friend?’, aaah, I’m getting goosebumps. You’re seriously someone to respect, Jjarro.”

Nanda simply grinned brightly as if the fact that I had deceived him until now and what I had said just now were all trivial matters.

This may have been the reason why I wanted to tell him.

“.....At any rate, I’m supposedly Jaim’s dad.”

“Yup.”

“Honestly speaking, it doesn’t feel like we’re a family. I’m just pretending to be a part of one in order to understand what families are.”

“.....Jjarro, you.....”

“But, there’s a big issue there. Even if I try to act like I’m a part of a family with the intention of playing house, if I’m going to play the role as the dad, then I have to know what a real ‘dad’ does and how they do it.....”

But since I’ve never had a father figure in my life.

I have no idea what I have to do as a dad.

This experiment was flawed from the beginning.

How could this be an experiment when I have no idea what to do?

“Regardless, since I’m the dad, I want to at least **act** like one. But I have no idea what I’m supposed to do.”

I couldn’t tell anyone this.

Be it Saeyeon, Jaim, Upperclassman Nabom, or Jihye, I couldn’t confess my thoughts to any of them. I had no other choice but to keep it a secret.

Or, at the very least, I could only tell a **friend**.

“Who knows? Wouldn’t thinking like that be both a method and a condition?”

So, in response to my concern, my one and only friend said that.

“.....Isn’t that winging it too much?”

He honestly wasn’t that helpful, though.

“It can’t be helped. I have a dad, but I never had an adorable daughter like Jaim. So how am I supposed to give you an answer?”

“You’re calling her adorable as well? As expected.”

“You also think that on the inside.”

Nanda laughed in a teasing manner before showing a somewhat proud look on his face.

“Still, I’m a bit happy as your friend.”

“What?”

“You’re also changing a little bit at a time, Jjarō. The number of times you’d say weird things have decreased compared to a while back, you don’t pretend to be bright all the time, and you’ve stopped disregarding people and calling them untaught masses.”

“.....Yeah.”

Since the need to do so has decreased now. Although it hasn’t disappeared completely.

I hated receiving sympathy. I hated being pitied. Because I knew that I would appear like that.

My situation where I was tossed aside by my family and was receiving help from my childhood friend who lived next door. However, I didn’t want other people to see me like this because I knew how I would look like to them.

That’s why I acted as if I were all right. I had no other choice but to believe that I was special. I believed that and behaved as such. In order to prevent my surroundings from discovering my weak side, I said and did weird things and acted as if I were a strong person who was okay and didn’t worry about things like this. An existence that was different compared to them. I acted like an existence not to be sympathized with, but an existence that was above all that.

“I don’t know about you, but I believe that this change of yours is a good sign, Jjarō. You started to worry about Saeyeon and Jaim now, right?”

Nanda’s pleased words.

A meaningless conversation with no grounds or basis. A simple encouragement.

However, at this moment, that was just enough to be comforting.

“.....I’ve been thinking lately, but wouldn’t it have been better if you were the dad? I mean, Jaim would have liked it.”

Nanda then flicked my forehead the instant I said those self-deprecating words.

“Never say those words in front of Saeyeon or Jaim.”

He had a serious look on his face, different from his usual expression. Thus I averted my gaze and answered him.

“.....I know.”

“Do you really? Seriously, you’re cruel, Jjarro.”

Nanda chuckled as if it couldn’t be helped and stood up.

“Then I’m going to the bathroom, so you should head back to your class before you’re late. Don’t worry about the thing regarding Jaim. Ah, don’t worry about something like a daughter thief either.”

“Like I said, I’m more worried about your choice of words.”

I let out a sigh and stood up as well.

“Shin Nanda.”

I spoke towards Nanda as he was walking out the back door of the classroom.

“Thanks.”

Nanda simply waved his hand at me without turning back.

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“Aah, what should I do……. What should I do, Master……?”

“Did you call for me?”

“Kya!”

……I was wondering what the issue was since she was calling out to me. Jihye, who was restlessly muttering to herself, got startled by my voice and had to smooth down her dress before turning around to face me. Did that action mean something?

“Ah, Master…….”

“What are you doing there?”

After school, Saeyeon had left first because she was going to go hang out with her friends, so once I got home by myself, unusually, Jihye didn't even realize I was home and was standing in front of a room while looking perplexed.

“What, do you need something from Jaim?”

The room Jihye was standing in front of was Jaim's. From what I could remember, Jaim dislikes Jihye, so she had told her to not even come close to her room, so Jihye would only clean the house when Jaim wasn't home. Jaim would be in her room around this time of the day.

“……Hm?”

The out of place feeling made me notice something. The room door was slightly open. Now that I think about it, Jihye was also peaking into the room. If it was only this, then I would have thought that the kid had done something needlessly, but…….

“……Ow.”

I heard a small groan coming from the inside of the room. When I peeked through the crevice of the door slightly, I couldn't see anyone. The only noticeable thing I could see was the blanket bulging strangely on the bed.Really, this kid.

"Why exactly do you like dark and small places so much?"

So once I opened the door completely and walked in, sure enough, the blanket twitched in response. This was making me worried that she was going to grow up to be a corner-living NEET. I casually blocked out the memory that I was going to shut myself in my research lab and live there in the future.

"Ah?! D-Don't enter your daughter's room without knocking!"

How bothersome.

"A while back you hid inside the washing machine, but is it your blanket this time?"

Am I supposed to call this growth or something? I nonchalantly sat down at the edge of her bed.

"So what is it this time? What's the issue?"

".....It's nothing. I just want to be alone."

She was completely inside her blanket and mumbling. Are you not uncomfortable like that? Once I grabbed her blanket, I could feel her holding onto it on her end as well and resisting.

"Stop being like that and come out. Are you sulking because Jihye told you to go home again?"

"It's not like that."

Her voice sounded too sulky for nothing to have happened. Although it felt like she truly did want to be left alone, the tone of her voice didn't feel right. So I put strength into my grip for a split second and pulled her blanket off of her. Jaim tried to resist, but the difference between our strength was too large.

".....What's up with that?"

".....It's nothing."

My expression then became rigid the instant Jaim's face was revealed. A swollen cheek. I'm not saying that it was swollen because she was pouting. It was red and swelling. As if she had been hit.

Looking carefully, there was a bruise around her eye, her lips were torn, and her hand that wasn't pulling on the blanket was holding onto an egg and pressing it against her eye.

"I just, rolled down some stairs."

Jaim let out a sigh as if it couldn't be helped now since her secret was revealed and said that, but.....

"Don't underestimate me. Do you think your injuries would end with just that if you roll down some stairs?"

I was seriously shocked when Saeyeon rolled down some stairs a long time ago. No, that's beside the point. Jaim turned her head away and changed her words.

".....I actually tripped."

"Look at me."

But it was obvious that that wasn't it either. If she fell down and hit something, then what was up with that bruise? I grabbed Jaim by the chin and forced her to look at me. Jaim stubbornly did whatever she could to not show her face to me, but like I said, the difference between our strength was too large.

".....Are you happy now? Give me my blanket back."

"Looking at the angle, they're about 150cm tall. They're right-handed. Considering the degree of the bruise, it's most likely an elementary school student. Who beat you up?"

Although the bruise on her eye said otherwise.

"I didn't get beat up. I was in a fight."

She gave in with that. Thus, the complaining Jaim confessed as if it were unavoidable now.

“My friends and I promised to play at the playground after school, but when I got there, some boys were harassing Heyeong. They apparently told her to get out since they were going to play soccer in the playground, but it seems Heyeong refused.”

“So?”

“When I went up to them, we had an argument, but they suddenly shoved Heyeong and she fell on the ground. That’s why I got into a fight with them.”

That’s quite the impressive tale. I was expecting something more. Without hiding my pitying gaze whatsoever, I spoke.

“So, you came home after being beaten up by a bunch of elementary school kids?”

“Do I look like that kind of person, Dad?”

Jaim glared at me with a terrifyingly cold gaze.

“I beat up the boys and chased them out, but they came back with their older brothers who’re in middle school, so I got kicked out after getting into a fight with them.”

“So, in the end, it doesn’t change the fact that you got beat up and came home crying.”

“I didn’t cry!”

Jaim yelled at me. The corners of her eyes were red.

“Why are you only able to talk like that, Dad? Are you not worried about your daughter?”

“You reap what you sow. You should have run away if your opponent is stronger than you.”

“.....”

Jaim glared daggers at me while biting her lip. She must have been really upset as she was pouting her lips profusely. Without avoiding my gaze, Jaim stared right at me and spoke with a trembling voice.

“But my friend was being harassed. Shouldn’t you protect your friend

whether you win or lose?”

I let out a deep sigh and shook my head.

“You have a great mentality, but if you’re going to fight anyway, then you should do so with the intention to win.”

“How was I supposed to win?! Not only were they boys, but they were also middle schoolers! Their bodies are much bigger than mine and they’re stronger than me!”

“That’s why I said you should’ve run away if you’re facing an opponent you can’t win against.”

“.....Seriously, Dad, you’re......”

Tears started to slowly gather in Jaim’s eyes as she trembled with rage. However, I didn’t stop talking there.

“In the first place, in this day and age of gender equality, there are no boys and girls when it comes to fights. If you’re going to put down the premise that you can’t win against a boy because you’re a girl, then you shouldn’t fight at all. If you say that your opponent didn’t go easy on you, then that means you’re admitting the fact that you’re a girl who doesn’t have the ability to fight unless someone is protecting you. Although saying that you’re doing it to protect your friends sounds nice, what are you going to do when you get beat up despite having said that?”

“......”

“Furthermore, how could you fight normally when the world is so terrifying nowadays? Do you not know how scary middle school students are these days? If those guys were messed up in the head, then who knows what they could have done to you. You only have two choices in these situations, run away before something like that can even happen or, if you’re resolved to fight, win by fair means or foul. There’s something you’re good at, right? Kick them in their crotch. Don’t get beat up and come home crying only to hide underneath your blanket.”

“.....Why, hk, are you, uu, only able, to talk like that, Dad.....?”

And in response to my words, Jaim couldn't take it any longer as frustrated tears ended up flowing down her cheeks. Jaim spoke as she wiped away her tears with her fist.

"I, was hit. It really hurt. Still, I fought to protect my friends, but, hk, why can't you say something like, uu, good job, or, it must have hurt. Why are you telling me it's my fault.....?"

While weeping, her clenched fists shook.

"I can't even go on my date with Nanda Oppa since I'm injured like this..... If I go all bruised, hkk, I wanted to look pretty..... Uuu."

"....."

"U-Uaaaaang..... Dummy, you're an idiot, Dad!"

While her shoulders trembled, Jaim kept wiping away her unending tears with both of her hands as she cried. As if she were really sad, as if she hated me for not being on her side.

So I let out a sigh and stroked her head.

"That's why you shouldn't go around getting hit, you kid."

Jaim raised her head because of my action.

".....Dad?"

If she had gone to someone else and told them that she got into a fight and got hurt, then they would probably do what she wants and comfort her by patting her back encouragingly. However, that would be it. It would end with that. At most, they'll probably tell her to not get into fights.

"In any case, if something like this happens again, then either run away or, if you're in a situation where you don't want to run, then make sure you win at any cost. Bite them. Headbutt them. Kick them in their crotch. Life is a battle. Understood?"

Jaim looked up at me blankly as if she didn't know whether she should get upset or not at my words which I had said while disheveling her hair. I stood up after giving one final pat on the head.

I see. So those adorable elementary and middle schoolers taught this shrewd and rude little girl a lesson, huh? Well done. Truly well done. I should go and offer them praise and a reward.

“Uhm……. Master? The Miss…….”

Jihye who was standing perplexed outside of Jaim’s room due to what Jaim had said and couldn’t enter. I simply shook my head and spoke.

“It’s nothing special. It seems she got into a fight with some neighborhood kids. People grow up by getting into fights. It’s nothing big.”

“But…….”

Jihye looked up at me with worry as if she wasn’t convinced. Yeah, this was something that would probably worry her. I headed towards my room without a word and Jihye looked back and forth between Jaim and me before following after me.

In any case, I have a rough grasp of the situation now. For her to get into a brawl with some local kids. She’s more of a kid than I thought. And here I thought she was a bit on the mature side.

At any rate, I’ll tease her about this later.

“I’m going to head out for a bit. Jihye, can you go out and buy some medicine and band-aids? You know where the pharmacy is, right?”

“Ah, yes. I’ve seen it a couple of times while buying groceries.”

Jihye nodded at my request. However, she then tilted her head quizzically.

“Uhm, but Master, why are you wearing a mask?”

“Spring is also a season where pollen, yellow dust, and all sorts of unhealthy substances fly around the air. Staying healthy is important.”

“It’s almost summer, though……. And the sunglasses?”

“Outside of visible rays, the sun emits all kinds of ultraviolet rays as well, and it’s bad for your vision if you receive those strong, direct rays of the sun. Ah, don’t worry. These are prescription sunglasses.”

“But it’s night time now……. And the hat?”

“A change of pace and a sense of fashion. In any case, I’m heading out for a bit.”

I have to praise them before they run away, after all.

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“Ah, you idiot! Kick it properly! Seriously…….”

A sloppily kicked ball flew through the air and rolled out onto the street. An elementary school kid came chasing after the bouncing ball.

“Ah, old man! Can you pick the ball up for us?”

The ball rolled straight towards me. The kid must have thought that I was going to pick it up for him as he started to slow down. I stopped the soccer ball with my foot and lightly kicked it up to my hand and caught it. Mhm, it seems I’m not rusty.

“Thank……. Ah.”

The approaching kid’s feet stopped in place the instant he saw my face. He must have not been able to see my face properly until this moment because of the backlight.

A black baseball cap, black sunglasses, and a white mask. I most likely appeared incredibly dangerous since I was hiding my face entirely. He probably couldn’t see it, but I approached the frozen kid while grinning brightly. The frightened child also hesitantly drew closer to me in order to receive the ball.

“T-Thank you very much…….”

“No, I’m the one who should be thankful.”

“Huh?”

The kid blinked in response to my words which I had said while shaking my head.

“Here, the ball.”

Once I held the ball out, something must have felt off to the kid as he reached

his hand out cautiously.

However, just before he could grab the ball, I took a screwdriver out from my tool belt and stabbed the ball. Instead of bursting with a 'Pop!', the ball slowly deflated while letting out a hissing sound as the air leaked out.

"H-Hiiik……."

"Kid."

"Y-Yes?"

A completely unknown person who was hiding their face. A wicked man who picked their ball up for them, but promptly popped it. I patted the head of the kid who was terrified by what he had witnessed. I'm praising him right now. I'm actually smiling underneath this pair of sunglasses and mask.

The kids who were waiting at the playground seemed to have noticed that the atmosphere was ominous as they looked at me with fearful eyes.

"I heard that earlier today, you got into a fistfight with a weird and rude girl who had a clothespin in her hair, right?"

"H-How did you……?"

"I have my ways. Don't worry. I'm not a strange person."

While smiling, I strengthened the grip on my hand that was patting his head. This was also known as an 'iron claw'. Referentially, it's a wrestling move.

"Ah, owowowowowow!"

It'll trouble me if you underestimate a scientist's grasping power. For starters, we have to really tighten and loosen screws, there are times where we have to move heavy objects, and our grasping power is also important in order to grab or fix certain parts in place. Mhm. It's important. I'm glad I trained myself.

"I'm not a strange person, I'm really not, but……."

I pressed down on his head by tightening my grip on the tip of my fingers and shook his head. Once I relaxed my grip and let his head go, it must have hurt as the kid fell to the ground while grasping his head. I'm not that cruel of a person. It was a reasonable degree of acupressure treatment. If anything, it was

probably good for his head since the blood vessels around his brain were stimulated. Well, I did put some emotion in it, though.

“I heard that you took really good care of my daughter. You harassed her quite well, huh?”

“Kuuuh……. W-What……?”

“You kids over there, come here.”

I ignored the kid on the ground and called out to the other kids who were about to run away. Once they heard my voice and noticed I was gesturing for them to come to me, they flinched. Naturally, they would be filled with the desire to run away, but.

“Kiddies, do you guys think you’re faster at running or I’m faster at running? Don’t you think that even if you try to run away, at least one of you will most definitely also end up like this kid?”

Tap, I spoke while poking the kid on the ground with the tip of my shoe. I didn’t kick him. Seriously, it was only a tap. Due to my threat, the kids looked at each other with fear in their eyes before slowly approaching me. Good, good.

“Now then, stand in a line in front of me, that’s an order. You should stand up too now, kid.”

I herded the kids to a corner of the playground and made them stand in a single file.

“I-I’m sorry…….”

“Have mercy…….”

“I told you guys I’m not a weird person, so stop acting like I’m some criminal.”

Well, I did hide my face just in case I did get reported. The world has honestly become a scary place these days. But, more importantly, “But, why are, a bunch of, young brats, already having, territory disputes, and, beating up, girls?!”

Between each word, I earnestly smacked their heads, which barely reached up to my chest, one at a time. I didn’t hit them that hard. About 1.5 times the amount of strength I use when I normally hit Jaim?

“Kuuuh…….”

“Do you understand, you brats?! If you didn’t reserve the playground by paying money or writing a lease, then behave! Don’t chase out some girls just because you don’t want to play with them! If I catch you guys doing this again, then I won’t stay still!”

It feels a bit peculiar shouting at a bunch of sobbing elementary school students who were holding their heads in pain. This makes it seem like I’m actually the bad guy here. Nevertheless, what’s so bad about a bad guy doing bad things? They’re the ones who hit my daughter first.

Still, I should stop here. After one last word.

“Next time I hear about this…….”

“What are you going to do, old man?”

“…….”

A hand grabbed my shoulder. I turned around cautiously.

“Ah, big bro!”

The elementary school kids’ eyes sparkled the instant they saw that reinforcement had arrived. I see. Jaim did say that she got beat up after fighting some middle schoolers.

……But these guys, are they really middle school students? How many years were they held back?

His eyes were located higher than my head. His arms started where my shoulders ended. A shaved head. The middle schooler looked down at me as he spoke while chewing on gum. There were two kids behind him who looked the same as him.

“What are you doing right now, old man? Huh?”

People said that kids these days were spirited, but these guys looked way too spirited. Honestly, I’m a bit intimidated.

“N-No, it’s just that…….”

“Why is an adult getting involved in a fight between kids? Do you lack

common sense, old man? Huh?”

Ptooley, he snarled as he spat out his gum. This exceeded my expectation. I thought that they would be in their first year of middle school since they were immature enough to get into a brawl with Jaim. More importantly, you guys also got involved in a fight between kids.

“What, do you have something to say?”

“N-No…….”

Naturally, there was no way I could say that. I said so before, didn’t I? Run away from opponents you can’t win against. On a side note, I’m seeing Jaim in a new light now. How could she even think about fighting something like this?

“Also, you’re hiding your face like this. What are you? A criminal? Should we go to a police station together?”

Tap tap, the middle schooler kept pushing my shoulder and shoving me into a corner. Once I stepped back a bit and averted my gaze because of his vigor, an unpleasant smile appeared on the middle schooler’s face as he placed his hand on my shoulder.

“You should educate your daughter properly as well, old man. A little kid is already going around starting fights. What would you have done if my little bro got hurt? I purposely didn’t hit her face because she’s a girl, but in any case, the rude brat kept trying to oppose me.”

Aha. I see. So he didn’t hit only her face.

“As a way to apologize, how about buying us some cigarettes, old man? Say hi every now and then whenever you see us on the street, you know? This is also a type of fate.”

“Uhm……. Can I, say, three things?”

“What? You aren’t going to tell us that you don’t have any money, are you? I can hear coins jingling in your pocket.”

He turned around to look at his other middle schooler friends behind him and snickered. You’re scary. Don’t be like that, you’ll make this old man cry. The other kids snickered as well. I knew this would happen. I grabbed the hand that

was on my shoulder and spoke.

“.....First, I’m the only one who’s allowed to tease and hit my daughter.”

“Huh?Ah.”

Crack, I gripped his hand tightly and twisted it upward.

“Second, I’m not an old man.”

With my other hand, I took out the item that I had brought with me from my pocket and placed it against the side of the middle schooler’s body before continuing.

“Third..... Everyone who laid their hands on my daughter is dead!”

“Kuuuah?!”

Along with a loud zap, the strength from the middle schooler’s body left him as he let out a scream. What are you getting so drained for? I set it so that it would only sting.

“A-A taser? That’s cowardl..... Aaaah!”

I grabbed onto his powerless arm and twisted it as I shouted. Cowardly?

“Only brute-like fellows who don’t know the strength of tools would call this cowardly! Have a taste of human intelligence!”

I brought this just in case, but I’m glad I did.

.....Well, it really is like me to bring this when I’m only scolding some elementary and middle school students at most, but a person should always be prepared.

Once the other middle schoolers saw the uncommon weapon I had abruptly pulled out and their friend letting out a groan while his arm was being twisted, they hesitated.

“O-Old man, let’s calm down. Okay?”

“Let him go and we can settle this with our words.”

“The time to settle this with words is already over! I also originally intended to simply tell these kids to get along since it’s just a bunch of local kids that got

into a fight, but you guys are the one who made me do this, you middle school delinquents! Young kids shouldn't smoke! Also, I'm not an old man!"

"Owowowowow!"

Darn it, it seems I put too much emotion in my last line. But aren't they going too far? I know I'm hiding my face and my face value underneath this mask is high, and I also feel all sorts of sorrow whenever I see some of my hair flow into the drain whenever I wash my hair, I'm still a high school student, you know?

".....All right, fine. It seems I got too excited as well."

I made myself take a deep breath in order to calm my nerves. I breathed in twice and exhaled once. Breathe in, and out——. I relaxed my grip slightly and spoke.

"In any case, since it seems we got too excited about a bunch of kids getting into a fight, let's forget this ever happened, like letting the rain wash everything away, apologize to each other appropriately, and let the kids get....."

However, my head turned in the middle of my sentence. There was an impact on my cheek and my field of vision went black and white for a moment. The middle schooler who I was holding shouted while I was staggering in order to stand up straight.

"Stop messing around, you old man! We were going to end it on a good note, too!"

Once the kid let out an angry 'Hey!' the other kids were able to snap out of their hesitation. I brushed my fingers over my lips which tasted metallic and saw a red liquid. B-Blood! I'm bleeding!

"You pieces of trash!"

"Hit him!"

I'm not exactly sure what happened after that.

In any case, the elementary school kids must not have thought that this would go this far as they started to cry. I saw stars and occasionally sparks, some screams echoed throughout the playground, I momentarily forgot about my balding issue as some of my hair was pulled out, I pulled out some of their hair

as well, I got some hits in, I was hit three times as much because I was fighting a 3:1 fight, I also realized that I still lacked exercise even though I started to go jogging after that previous incident, and more importantly, these guys are hitting me a bunch even though I'm wearing glasses. This is attempted murder.

"Stop right there!"

Right when I was about to be put on the defensive, everyone turned to face the loud voice.

"....."

"....."

No one could say anything about the surreal sight before them.

With the darkening evening sky behind her, a single maid was standing with an upset look on her face.

"What are you all doing right now?!"

She put her hands on her hips and spread her legs at the same width of her shoulders. Her skirt fluttered gently due to the evening wind. The pharmacy bag she was holding in her hand fluttered as well.

"You..... Why are you here?"

Once I was barely able to ask that while I was holding onto someone's collar and my collar was also being held, Jihye spoke while still looking upset.

"It's embarrassing, but on my way back from the pharmacy after buying ointment and band-aids for the Miss, I got lost, so I was wandering around. I figured I should be able to find my way back if I started from a place I was familiar with, so I came to the playground like this, but what is this?"

".....Did you get lost again even though you said you knew the way?"

Jihye shook her head and approached us.

"After Master left earlier, I heard about what happened from the Miss. I couldn't have possibly imagined that something like this would happen when Master went out, but seeing as things have come this far, I can't stand idly by."

A confident pose. A seriously enraged gaze. Due to that pressure, even the

middle schoolers ended up letting me go as they looked at Jihye and fixed their posture.

Don't tell me this girl intends to fight as well?

Her confident attitude made me recall something. That's right, if I think about it, one of my goals was to conquer the world through my robot maids. There's a chance that future me had given her martial arts or combat capabilities. Maids are portrayed as powerful in things like manga and anime after all.

"W-Wait a second, Jihye, let's calm down....."

But using those sorts of weapons against middle school students would be excessive. Well, I did use a weapon myself first, but if I had given her combat abilities with the purpose of conquering the world, then she was definitely a 'secret weapon'.

Jihye glared at me fiercely in response to my words.

"Do you think I could calm down right now?"

No. She's definitely mad. This is my first time I've seen her this upset.

"What are you going to do, if we don't stop?"

Despite the serious aura, the middle schooler did his best to assume composure. I'm saying assume because his fists and feet were twitching uneasily. Even though there was a difference between their physiques, Jihye didn't look even remotely intimidated.

It felt like I could hear a snap.

While standing before everyone, Jihye took a deep breath and struck a pose.

With one hand on her hip, she extended her other arm outward with her hand open and spoke.

"Fighting is bad!"

.....

What did she say just now?

While waving her extended hand at the middle schoolers, who were unable to say anything at all and were staring at her blankly, she continued.

“Getting into a fight means that you’re harming others! That’s not a good thing to do! Moreover, harassing kids is even worse! You shouldn’t bully others simply because you’re strong!”

“.....What?”

The middle schoolers muttered as if they were dumbfounded and as if they found this situation to be ridiculous.

What’s with this sermon that wouldn’t even work on preschoolers.....?”

“What is this.....? A lot of weird things keep happening today.”

It seems the middle school student was able to regain his senses as he shook his head. With big strides, he approached Jihye without getting rid of his tone of voice that sounded as if he found this situation to be absurd.

“Oi, I don’t know who you are, but you should get......”

“Bad!”

Jihye then flicked the forehead of the approaching middle schooler and continued.

“You all don’t like being hurt as well, right? Everyone is the same. You should think about other people’s feelings as well. Wouldn’t you also feel frustrated if you’re playing with your friends but some other people came along and told you to go play somewhere else? You would obviously refuse, right?”

“Y-Yeah......”

“Everyone should get along. You shouldn’t use your strength to injure others. And most importantly, do you know how worried your family would be if they found out that you were going around like this harassing others and getting into fights?”



Jihye spoke sternly, and yet, attentively. Before I knew it, the anger on her face was gone and only a concerned smile remained.

“Your little brothers are watching you right now. They’ll watch what you do and start imitating you. If your little brothers go off and get injured in a fight, then you would also feel bad, right? You’d be sad, wouldn’t you?”

“.....Yes.”

“So be an example. If they do something bad, then teach them to apologize and instruct them so that everyone can smile and play together. You children as well, asking someone else to hurt others simply because there’s something you want is a bad thing to do. Playgrounds are a place for everyone to play together, isn’t it?”

“W-We’re sorry......”

So, because of this sincere sermon, although I couldn’t believe it, both the elementary and middle schoolers lowered their heads with apologetic looks on their faces.

“These words are also being directed to you, Master. I fully understand that you did this because you were worried about the Miss, but even so, the Miss would be even sadder if she found out that you used a tool and acted violently.”

“.....Forgive me.”

I also took the same pose as the kids.

Jihye smiled happily once she heard our replies.

“Now then, shake hands as a means to make up. No fighting from now on. If you all get along and play together, then you’ll be able to smile together as well.”

“.....I’m sorry.”

“.....I’m, well, also sorry.”

I shook hands with the middle schoolers, albeit hesitantly. It seems this was enough for Jihye as she nodded with a grin.

“Now then, since it’s getting late, everyone should return home before your families start to worry.”

The middle schoolers awkwardly left the playground with their little brothers. Jihye waved towards their backs and shouted.

“Be careful of cars and get home safely!”

They nodded lightly at her before disappearing into an alley.

I fixed the position of my cracked, prescription sunglasses and looked at Jihye.

Jihye was watching the kids leave until they were fully gone with a satisfied smile on her face. Her hair fluttered due to the evening breeze and she turned her head for a moment to tuck her hair behind her ear.

Because of this sight, because the resemblance felt uncanny, I ended up muttering involuntarily.

“.....**Saeyeon.**”

“Pardon?”

.....Ah.

Jihye gave me a surprised look before giggling.

“Master, I’m not the Missus. I’m Jihye.”

“.....Yeah. That’s right. My mistake.”

I was barely able to manage my expression and utter those words.

The feeling I’ve been getting for a while now. This peculiar feeling.

There probably weren’t a lot of people who would think they resembled one another when you only looked at their outer appearances. But for some reason, the thought would occasionally come to mind whenever I looked at Jihye.

Each of her thoughtless words, each of her meaningless actions, and even the sermon she gave those kids a second ago.

For some reason, I could feel something Saeyeon-like from them.

Jihye tilted her head curiously because of my gaze.

“.....We should go home before it gets too late as well. Saeyeon should have

returned home by now, so she might be worried. There's also Jaim."

Thus I shook my head and spoke after taking the pharmacy bag from Jihye's hand. Her hand moved restlessly as if she wanted to hold the bag herself, but she eventually nodded and started to follow behind me.

But, if what I thought was true, then.

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“Didn’t I already say that I went and beat them all up? Ow.”

Speaking and eating at the same time made my cheek sting, so I let out a groan.

Dinner time. After preparing a somewhat simple dinner, we all sat down together to eat. There was a concerned look on Saeyeon’s face as she spoke after hearing my groan.

“As I thought, I don’t think fighting is good…….”

Saeyeon mumbled while using her chopsticks to poke at the cooked grains of rice that were in her bowl. Jihye nodded her head and spoke.

“I agree, Madam. I was curious since Master said he was going out, but I never would have imagined that he would have gone there to fight them.”

Although Jihye would normally only watch us eat, Saeyeon suggested that we should eat together today, so there was a bowl of rice and some tableware placed in front of Jihye as well. While picking up some of the side dishes with her chopsticks, Jaim turned to me and asked a question.

“……Dad, did you perhaps go and fight them because of me?”

“Of course not. Do I look like someone who would do that? They simply tried to mug me while I was minding my own business, so I got into a fight with them. Middle school students these days are scary.”

Jihye giggled lightly at my response, but I decided to ignore her. I ordered her to not say anything unnecessary, so it should be fine.

“I see.”

With a band-aid on her cheek, Jaim smiled with her panda-like eyes. Why are

you smiling as if you know something? Stop smiling, kid. I'll get attached.

However, Saeyeon stuck her lips out as if she were worried and spoke.

"I know that Jjaro got into that fight because you were worried about Jaim, but don't do that next time. If you get hurt then, we'll all be sad."

"I told you, I didn't fight for Jaim's sake."

Why is she so good at figuring things out. Seriously, only when it comes to weird things.

I took a shower after dinner. I didn't forget to give myself a scalp massage. I'm lamenting because it feels like a lot of my hair was pulled out today.

Jaim went to her room saying she was tired, so today's game match was omitted. Jihye went to the kitchen to wash the dishes. I decided to relax in the living room by watching TV while laying down on the floor. I was also tired. My eyes weren't good, so I couldn't see well from the couch.

"Ow....."

I rubbed my cheek which stung even more after being submerged in hot water. In any case, middle schoolers nowadays are scary. Fists are scary as well. I was bruised here and there, so there was no doubt that I was going to be sore tomorrow.

While laying down, I used one arm as a headrest while I picked my ear with my free arm. I wonder if those middle schoolers were talking behind my back. My ear felt itchy.

"Jjaro?"

"Hm?"

Once I turned my head towards the source of the voice, I saw Saeyeon looking down at me. Saeyeon was holding an ear pick with a bright smile on her face.

"If your ears are itchy, want me to clean them out for you?"

".....What?"

Why was she acting like this all of a sudden? Saeyeon seemed embarrassed because of my response as she sat down with a red face.

“Uhm, mom told me. She said that it’s the wife’s duty to clean her husband’s ears. It feels really good when someone cleans your ears.”

“Is that so? I don’t really know because no one has ever done it for me before.”

“How about it?Or do you not want me to?”

After seeing my blank expression, Saeyeon asked cautiously as if she was disappointed.

“No, I don’t particularly mind.....”

My ear definitely felt itchy. I could tell by instinct that I wouldn’t be able to do it properly by myself. I feel like there won’t be any earwax since I just came out of the shower, though.

“Really? Then is it fine if I clean your ears, Jjaro?”

Seriously, you recover way too quickly. Saeyeon smiled happily at my reply and sat crossed-legged next to me and patted her thigh. She was probably telling me to place my head there.

Honestly, I was worried about entrusting my ear to Saeyeon.....

A-And..... How should I say it? Using Saeyeon’s lap as a pillow was, uhm, it’s like, uh.....

“Now then, lay down, Jjaro.”

“.....All right.”

Nevertheless, for starters, with caution, I laid my head down as softly as possible.

“You picked this ear just now, right, Jjaro? Then I’ll start here. Turn your head.”

“Ack, don’t turn my head! My head doesn’t turn 180 degrees!”

I complained towards Saeyeon’s hands which were pushing my head and flipped my body around. Honestly, rather than it being intentional, I did this because it hurt.

“.....Ack.”

So my realization came after my action.

A short distance, a very short distance. No, I was in contact with Saeyeon's lower abdomen.

I couldn't see because it was dark, but beyond her thin pajamas, which were very slightly see-through, Saeyeon's skin was definitely there.

Furthermore, this meant that, I mean, if I turn my head slightly, then something like her panties or even underneath.....

"E-Ehem!"

"T-That tickles, Jjarro....."

The trembling and wind caused by me clearing my throat seemed to have tickled Saeyeon as she squirmed. I felt my face getting hotter due to that response. As I expected, I have to turn my body around. But once I tried to turn my head, it seems even that tickled her as Saeyeon squirmed again. W-What do I do? For now, I tried to raise my line of sight, but then either her brassiere or her perfect, beautifully-sized chest underneath were.....

"....."

All right. Let's close my eyes. Yup. It's dark so I shouldn't be able to see anything if I shut my eyes. Wait, no, I can't see anyway if my eyes are closed.

This is bad. I can't think properly. If I close my eyes, all of my senses excluding my vision become more sensitive, so the sweet fragrance of soap emanating from Saeyeon's just showered body was stimulating my nose. My brain was melting in this sweetness. Why does she smell so nice? The sensation of her soft pajamas tickled my cheek.



“Okay, I’m going to start now.”

It seems Saeyeon was unaware of my predicament as she simply giggled. The sound of her happy giggle tickled my ear. The sensation of her putting the ear pick in my ear. The rustling sound caused by her lightly scraping the surface.

“A-All right. G-Get it over with quickly.”

Thus, I uttered those words and shut my eyes tightly. End it quickly. During that time, in order to not think of anything else, I filled my head with the strength of science. Quickly, end it quickly!

“Ei!”

And Saeyeon **thrust** into my ear.

“Why are you uttering a k’ihap when you’re only cleaning my……. Guaaaaaaah!”

(TL note: K’ihap, also known as Kiai in Japanese, is the sound people make when they do a move in martial arts. [LINK](#))

The instant I opened my eyes due to a concerning sound, sparks appeared in my vision for some reason. I’m not joking. It hurt as if my ear were burning from the inside. My hips automatically extended and retracted. I felt like tears were about to come out.

“I-I told you that tickles, Jjaro. Don’t move!”

“Kuh, hu……. Even if, you tell me not to move…….”

“That’s weird……. I can definitely see it……. There!”

“Guuuh……. B-Be more geeeeentle!”

Before I could even utter a proper sentence, my vision sparkled again. This definitely wasn’t ‘cleaning’ my ear. This was something being thrust into my ear. I’m going to die. I’ll die at this rate. My natural instinct to avoid harm tried to get my body out of this torture, but…….

“Ah, I told you not to move!”

“Kuuuuuuuh——…….”

She was in the middle of cleaning out my ear, so it hurt twice as much. It seems Saeyeon couldn't take my squirming any longer as she smiled and modestly pressed down on my shoulder with her arm so that I couldn't move. The scraping sound felt like it was echoing now.

"Now then, Mr. Customer, is it itchy here~?"

"Kuak! Gaak! Giiaaak!"

"Really, Jjaro, you don't have to make such a fuss."

A fuss? You would definitely cry if I did this to you.

"A-Are you not, done yet.....?"

Saeyeon answered my question which I was barely able to spit out.

"There's still a lot left. It's okay. I've figured it out. Ei!"

"Like I said, the very fact that you're letting out a k'ihap is wro, owowowow!"

W-Why do I have to go through this?

Is it that? Is she doing this because I got into a fight? Is this the stern scolding of a wife? No, this is torture. I won't be able to use my ears at this rate. Isn't a future where I'm only in my twenties but I'm already bald and using hearing aids too cruel?

"I'm done with this side. Flip over, Jjaro."

While I was mentally drawing out a blueprint for a fully automatic ear cleaner for the sake of the future in order to escape from the mind-boggling pain coming from my ear, Saeyeon uttered those words and took the ear pick out. All right, let's run away like this. I tried to raise my upper body and make a dash for it, but.....

"....."

Why does she look so happy?

"What are you doing? I said to flip over."

Saeyeon patted her inner thigh. I don't know what was so entertaining and fun that made her have such an unerasable smile on her face.

No. Don't be deceived. This girl is the devil. She shoved a long stick into my ear just a second ago and violated it mercilessly. I was worried that I might be bleeding. Was my eardrum okay?

But.....

".....Did it perhaps hurt.....?"

It seems she noticed my hesitation as the corners of Saeyeon's mouth and brows went down along with her shoulders. Sullenly, her gaze changed into a disappointed and apologetic one.

".....Fine, I'll turn around."

It's a big problem that I've become such a good person lately. I let out a sigh and laid my head on top of Saeyeon's lap. In order for the same thing to not happen, I looked outward. Thanks to that, I couldn't see Saeyeon's face.

"Uhm, did it not hurt?"

Saeyeon spoke carefully. I should probably tell her that it didn't hurt. That's why I laid back down.

"Yeah. It hurt. It seriously hurt. You would have cried if you were on the receiving end."

But that's a choice for those untaught masses who simply want to score points. I'm always honest. I felt Saeyeon becoming sullen behind me, but it wasn't my problem. It still stings, you know?

"So make sure you're gentle this time. If you do it painfully again, then we're never doing this again. Okay?"

".....Okay! I'll be gentle this time!"

.....It's a big problem that I've become such a good person lately. Seriously.

I grumbled to myself as I folded my arms and closed my eyes. I couldn't see anything this time, but I still did it anyway.

"....."

My words must have spurred her to concentrate, as Saeyeon didn't make any noise this time. The sensation in my ear felt clearly smoother this time. A weird

sensation where I couldn't tell whether it tickled or was relaxing.

"How is it? Is this good enough?"

"Yeah. It's perfect. Keep it like this."

"All right. Ehehe....."

I heard a proud giggle once I gave my response, so I readjusted my position slightly.

She must have been telling the truth when she said she figured it out earlier because her hand movements were more proficient than before. She seemed to have also gained some leisure according to that as she started to hum instead of saying anything.

"~?"

.....Are you even going to hum 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'? Just how much do you like that song?

A rustling sound that tickled the inner portion of my ear and the sound of rhythmical humming that I could hear in between. These noises felt relaxing.

This tender feeling of Saeyeon's thigh pressing against my cheek, the soft sensation of her pajamas, her long hair flowing down and tickling me as it dangled above my nose, and the scent of soap and shampoo emitting from her body. For some reason, a warm feeling was filling my body.

"——.....♪"

But, that snapping rhythm, doesn't go well, with humming.....

While I was thinking that, I wound up humming along with her as well.

Due to this comfy feeling, my consciousness was.....

Yeah, it's not like, I never had, a memory, like this.

A long time ago, at a time I can't even remember anymore, when I still had hope in my family, when I tried hard for them, There was a time when, a person cleaned my ears like this.

And, at some point, Saeyeon's mom.

Saeyeon was sitting next to us and waiting for her turn while I fell asleep like this, because of this rustling feeling…….

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“.....Jjaro? Jjaro?”

“Hm.....?”

I felt someone shaking my shoulder gently. There was a gentle voice. I was slowly roused from my sleep. I felt a bit lightheaded. I wonder if it was because of the smell.

“Are you awake?”

Once I raised my gaze, I saw a brightly smiling face.

“You were sleeping so pleasantly that I couldn’t wake you up.”

Beautiful..... She was like a goddess..... Simply those thoughts went through my head.

“Jjaro. Your mouth. Drool.”

“.....Y-Yeah. I’m up.”

I quickly pulled myself up. I took my glasses off and rubbed my flushed face. My guard was down because I hadn’t woken up completely yet. The fact that I had drooled while sleeping must have been amusing as Saeyeon giggled.

It seems I had used her as a pillow for a fair amount of time since I could hear Saeyeon rubbing her thighs behind me. The sound of her pajamas rustling.

“H-How long was I asleep?”

“You didn’t sleep for that long. About an hour? You must have been tired, Jjaro.”

I averted my gaze from Saeyeon’s beaming face.

So I slept on her lap for an hour..... That’s more than enough. Her legs must

be really numb. I smacked my lips and stood up.

“Then I’m going to bed first. Make sure you don’t sleep late either, Saeyeon.”

I must have seriously been tired without a doubt. My guard was lowered too much as well. In times like this, the best choice was to not push yourself and simply get some rest.

“Uhm……. Jjaro?”

However, the edge of my clothes was caught the instant I was about to head to my room.

Saeyeon’s fingers, which had grabbed my sleeve, were fidgeting.

“Uhm, h-how about sleeping together today? Jaim went to sleep first and Jihye said she was going to go recharge.”

I was wondering where she was. Once I looked around, I saw Jihye sitting in her usual recharging spot in the corner of the living room with her arms wrapped around her knees. Inside of a box that Jaim had prepared. Isn’t the kid being a bit mean? She’s not a pet.

“I wanted to sleep with Jjaro since it’s been a while…….”

Hesitantly, while twisting her body slightly, Saeyeon turned her gaze away.

Ever since we started to live together, although there were times we slept together along with Jaim, it has definitely been a long time since we slept with just the two of us.

“……Well, I don’t really mind.”

So I let out a sigh and gave her that response.

There was something I wanted to talk to Saeyeon about anyway.

However, instead of becoming happy because of my answer, her cheeks became even redder as her fingers fidgeted.

“Huh?”

Saeyeon turned her head, released the hand that was grabbing my sleeve, and spoke while stretching her palm out towards me.

“T-Today is, a safe day, s-so it’s fine, if we sleep, while holding hands…….”

“……What?”

“I-I said it’s okay if we sleep while holding hands today…….”

With a flushed face, both her brows and the corners of her mouth twitched. Her large eyes kept sneaking glances at me. As if she were nervous.

“……Do you not want to?”

“……Ah, jeez.”

In the end, I grumbled to myself as I carefully grabbed Saeyeon’s hand.

“Jjaro?”

It seems my action caught her off guard as her hand flinched as if it were trying to escape, but it soon relaxed again. She looked up at me with her large eyes.

Saeyeon knows how things work now. She knows that nothing will happen if we sleep while holding hands. So her telling me that it’s okay to hold hands and sleep simply means that she wants to sleep while holding hands.

So yeah, it’s fine. It’s all right. It should be fine.

……It’s fine, right?

I turned my head away so that she couldn’t see my red face and went to my room with Saeyeon in tow before lying down on my bed. It was a single-size bed so our shoulders touched. The part of my skin that was in contact with her felt hot.

“……E-Ehem.”

This doesn’t require emphasis, but this was embarrassing. Saeyeon’s fingers moved around a bit once I cleared my throat. My palm felt itchy.

“I was a bit surprised today.”

I turned my head once Saeyeon spoke. The room was dark because the lights were off. The moonlight pierced through the window and dyed the room a dark shade of blue.

“I-It’s not like I particularly wanted to sleep with you! It’s just…….”

“No, the fact that Jjaro got into a fight for Jaim.”

“……Like I said, I didn’t do that because of Jaim.”

How persistent, this girl. Saeyeon chuckled at my comment which I had muttered while turning away from her.

“When we were little, that’s what you would always say whenever you went to fight with the kids that made fun of me, right?”

“…….”

“That’s why I cleaned your ears in order to cheer you up.”

Childhood friends are really troublesome. Saeyeon giggled as if she were pleased, but she also raised her brows as if she were slightly upset before continuing.

“But, as I thought, you shouldn’t get into fights. Though I told you this back then as well.”

“……I’m sorry.”

“You won’t get into fights from now on, right? You’ll resolve things with your words, right?”

“I will.”

It wasn’t until I gave her a small nod that Saeyeon smiled gently.

“But Jaim clearly takes after you, Jjaro. She got into a fight in order to protect her friend, didn’t she?”

“Even though you told me to not get into fights.”

“I scolded her properly once I got home. I told her that fighting is bad.”

“Is that so?”

Well, Jaim did take after me without a doubt. Mainly her personality. Should I say that our fundamental thought processes were the same? Was it because we had similar experiences? Although this fact was worrying. I let out a small sigh.

“What’s wrong?”

Saeyeon didn't miss my tiny reaction and asked that. The moonlight furtively reflected the side of her body, revealing her warm smile.

"Is it because of Jaim?"

"There's Jaim, and there's also Jihye."

Once I nodded meekly and said that, Saeyeon simply looked at me with blinking eyes as she waited for me to continue.

"No, it's just that it feels like those two really don't get along."

"Ah……. It certainly feels like Jaim doesn't like Miss Jihye."

It seems Saeyeon was thinking about something similar as she nodded her head.

Even today, Jaim would normally thank anyone who helps her, which Jihye did, and yet, she didn't say anything to her.

Well, I have my assumptions as to why. I can think of two reasons.

First, it very likely has to do with Jihye being a robot. Outside of Saeyeon and I, other people aren't able to tell for certain whether Jihye is a robot or not. Of course, this is partially because she behaves and reacts very human-like, but, more importantly, it's probably because people aren't used to the existences known as robot maids.

However, to Jaim, robots are things which she had already seen since she was little and thus had grown accustomed to them. Similar to how TVs are no longer fascinating to us, Jihye probably feels like a home appliance to her. No, without a doubt, Jihye feels like that to her.

And second, it's because Jaim clearly takes after me.

In regard to both my fundamental thinking process and experiences.

"So, do you plan to make Jaim and Miss Jihye reconcile, Jjaroo?"

"Well, that would be the best thing to do. Whether they stay here or go back to the future."

Saeyeon laughed silently at my words.

"You're really like a dad these days, Jjaroo."

“Not exactly. It’s just…….”

Because I had a similar experience. I muttered these words under my breath. It seems Saeyeon didn’t notice as she simply smiled happily.

“I-In any case, do you have an idea, Saeyeon?”

“Hm? Me?”

“You’re better at dealing with other people than I am, after all. I’m wondering if you might’ve thought of something.”

Once those words were out of my mouth, Saeyeon blinked a couple of times before asking a question.

“Does that mean, you need me?”

“……Well, I guess that’s one way you could look at it.”

I scratched my cheek with one hand as I turned my gaze away from hers. The sound of Saeyeon giggling tickled my ears.

Saeyeon spoke while tapping her lips with the tip of her finger as if she were thinking.

“I wonder……. It seems like Miss Jihye is worried about Jaim a lot and wants to get along with her, so there’s no problem there. I think everything will work out if Jaim opens up a little more.”

Saeyeon tilted her head as she let out an audible ‘Hmm’ sound.

“In a way, Miss Jihye is Jaim’s second mom, right?”

“…….”

Was she saying that knowingly or unknowingly?

I know Saeyeon has been like this since a long time ago, and I was the one who **made her like this**, but I worry sometimes.

“……Saeyeon, do you not want to see **auntie** again?”

“…….”

Saeyeon’s face stiffened slightly once I said those words.

……How stupid. I'm being way too reckless today. I didn't expect myself to go as far as to say this. I didn't know what to say next, so I smacked my lips.

"Of course I want to see her again. **Mom.**"

Saeyeon's face as she said that was the same lonesome expression which she would sometimes show.

"But……. I can't see her anymore."

I couldn't say anything.

Saeyeon's mom passed away before Saeyeon could even start attending elementary school. She was a person who truly cherished Saeyeon. I also, well, received my fair share of doting. Although it was a type of doting that I didn't particularly want.

Once the person she had listened to so well had passed away, Saeyeon didn't speak for a while, no, for a long time. She felt alone. She was lonely.

This is just my opinion, but that's probably why Saeyeon's dad got a new wife. Saeyeon's current **mother**.

Her personality and the mood she gave off were completely different, but Saeyeon's mother also cherished Saeyeon quite a lot. It shouldn't have been a marriage for the sake of redeeming Saeyeon's mom, but she treated Saeyeon as if she had given birth to her herself.

It took some time, but Saeyeon returned to normal. To be exact, she decided to only show her lonely and solitary side when she was alone. Is what I think she decided. It's probably what she decided.

Saeyeon's grip loosened a bit, so I strengthened my grip instead.

Saeyeon leaned her body closer to mine.

"But, Jaim has both me and Miss Jihye, doesn't she?"

Saeyeon spoke while furtively pressing her cheek against my shoulder.

"That means she's able to see both of her moms, so why is she upset?"

"……Who knows? Maybe it's because she thinks I might cheat on you with Jihye?"

“.....Jjaro, do you really like machines more?”

Saeyeon looked straight at me. I only said that to change the topic, but was that too far for a joke? I shook my head and spoke.

“It’s a joke, a joke. You don’t have to take it so seriously.”

“.....I didn’t take it that seriously, mon.”

Saeyeon pouted and turned her head away. She stuck out her lips slightly before mumbling in a small voice.

“Jjaro doesn’t like it when I’m jealous and Jjaro already confessed his feelings to me, so I know you won’t, but.....”

Saeyeon kept sneaking glances at me.

She moved her fingers slowly and locked her fingers with mine.

Moist eyes reflected by the moonlight. Smooth lips.

Those lips moved steadily.

“I know you won’t, but.....”

Red cheeks that didn’t lose to the blue light. She rubbed her flowing hair against her shoulder like a spoiled child.

Her pajamas slid down slightly and revealed her slender neck, collarbone, and the shoulder strap of her brassiere. Her smooth, white skin glowed.

“Sometimes, I mean..... A little.....”

A fragrant scent tickled my nose. Saliva started to accumulate in my mouth.

N-No, this isn’t right. Don’t panic. This is a trap. I’m a wholesome man. I won’t lose to something like worldly desire. I have no interest in carnal desires. Having Jaim is something that happens in the distant future. In the first place, Saeyeon said that today is a safe day. So.....

“.....”

So, well. It’s okay since there’s no need to give birth to Jaim or I don’t have to worry about having Jaim now?

.....What the heck is going on in my head?

“Jjaro?”

“I-It’s sort of hot today, isn’t it?”

I spoke while crossing my legs. If you’re a guy, then you’d understand. It’s not weird. It really isn’t. This little guy just does this sometimes.

But, what am I supposed to do at times like this?

Refuse? How? I’m tired today so let’s just sleep? Or do I say that I really am only interested in machines? No, that isn’t the truth.

Do I consent? How? Should I say that I’ll suffocate her to death like last time? Or, for starters, our clothes……. Nono, what’s wrong with my head?

While I was contemplating, Saeyeon carefully leaned her head forward and gently closed her eyes. She brought her lips together and inched towards me.

“…….”

My face inadvertently started moving forward as if I were being pulled. The grip in our hands that were locked together became stronger. We were at a distance where our breaths could tickle the other’s face. Taking off my glasses, I closed my eyes as well…….

Slam. The door opened.

“Hiik?!”

“Uah?!”

Saeyeon and I both let out a stifled cry at the same time and distanced ourselves from one another. The light from the hallway entered through the opened door. Our eyes had become accustomed to the dark, so we could only see an unrecognizable silhouette standing at the doorway.

“……I can’t sleep.”

The silhouette rushed towards us with hurried steps, threw the blanket aside, and squeezed between me and Saeyeon.

“J-Jaim?”

Saeyeon sounded alarmed. I also calmed down my beating chest.

“Knock before you enter the room! Also, go to your room and sleep!”

“This.”

Jaim pushed something towards me as I shouted. Right in front of my nose. I pulled my head back and put my glasses on to see what exactly she was holding.

“I can’t sleep, so read this storybook for me.”

“A storybook? Seriously, you…….”

Why would an elementary schooler want a storybook read for them? You aren’t a preschooler. No, even preschoolers these days can read by themselves.

“What? Is it that hard to read this for someone?”

Jaim stuck her lips out and pouted once I looked at her with a rather pitying gaze.

“It isn’t difficult. What I’m trying to say is…….”

“Would it kill you to read a storybook for your daughter who’s lonely because she can’t sleep?”

“I mean…….”

“It’s been such a long time since Jjaro read a storybook before bed.”

Jaim grumbled while Saeyeon simply giggled. Why are you recalling something that happened back in preschool? Forget about it already.

“……Ah, fine. I just have to read it, right?”

I let out a sigh and turned on the standing lamp next to the bed. Really, this kid likes these sort of family events too much.

“Eh, The Tale of Shimcheong. ……Of all things, why’d you pick The Tale of Shimcheong?” *(TL note: The Tale of Shimcheong is about a girl named Shimcheong and her steadfast love and loyalty for her blind father. Read the story [HERE](#).)*

“Just because?”

Jaim blinked, making it seem as if she didn’t put much thought into this. Well, I feel like I know why. It hasn’t been that long since she claimed to be an

adorable daughter, so she most likely intends to implant the ideology that daughters are hardworking and admirable into my head.

I sighed a couple of times before flipping the cover of the book. Jaim and Saeyeon were watching me with sparkling eyes. Do you two like having stories read to you that much?

“Ehem. Once upon a time, there was an old man named Shim Bongsa.”

“Jjarro, what does bongsa mean?”

(TL note: Bongsa(봉사) can also mean ‘service/volunteer’)

“Mom, bongsa refers to when you and dad uni……. Ububu!”

……I may have overestimated Jaim.

Everyone probably already knows by now, but the plot of The Tale of Shimcheong goes like this: There was a blind man named Shim Bongsa who had lost his wife at a young age and thus lived with only his daughter, Shimcheong. One day, a Buddhist monk rescues him when he was about to fall in a river and, with that as his motive, he gets indoctrinated by an evil religion and prepares three hundred bags of rice as an offering to Buddha.

“……Dad, you’re way too twisted.”

“It’s the truth, isn’t it? Even though he offered all that, he wasn’t able to open his eyes.”

“The story hasn’t gotten that far yet. Stop spoiling the story.”

Three hundred bags is an insane number, you know? In today’s society, a bag of rice is 144kg. If he prepared three hundred bags, then in today’s economy, that would be over one hundred million won, but if you consider that the era Shim Bongsa was in, that would be over 1 billion won.

“It’s quite the massive scam. That’s the price of a house. Religion is scary.”

“Like I said, your head is too twisted, Dad.”

Since there’s no way that a blind man could prepare that much money, Shim Bongsa wickedly committed human trafficking with his daughter and accumulated that large sum of money. As I thought, families aren’t needed. How could he commit human trafficking?

“.....Why are you looking at me as if I’m some golden calf?”

“No, I was just wondering if I could get a hundred won if I sold this..... Ow! Don’t bite me!”

In any case, after being sold off in the place of the bags of rice, Shimcheong resolves herself to drown in the Indangsoo Sea. No, if anything, she was forcefully made into a human sacrifice. But for her to not run away and really go into the sea.

“Can you stop adding your personal opinion to the story and just read it normally?”

From this point forth, the story turns into a fantasy. After having fallen into the Indangsoo Sea, Shimcheong receives the favor of a Dragon King who found her filial love to be admirable. Thus, he resurrects Shimcheong, allowing her to return to land. What exactly did she do in the Dragon’s Palace?

In any case, the resurrected Shimcheong was put inside of a lotus flower and delivered to shore. A king, having coincidentally witnessed this, chose her to be his queen. As I expected, life is all about luck. Even though Shimcheong was sold away, she foolishly stated that she wanted to see her father, so she gathered every single man in the country named Bongsas and held a banquet.

“In the end, she also knew that she was a part of an evil scam. She invited all of the Bongsas even though she knew that his blindness wouldn’t have been cured despite her service, right?”

“She probably wanted to see him just in case. If he’s able to see again, then her father would be able to live happily as well, and if he was still blind, then she could continue to take care of him.”

“Even though she was sold off and even made into a human sacrifice. She could have contacted him personally since she knows her home address, couldn’t she? How stupid.”

“.....Really, Dad.”

I disregarded the brat who shook her head after letting out a sigh.

At any rate, the terrible parent, Shim Bongsas, who was scammed and forced

to sell his daughter, participated in the banquet and was so surprised to meet his daughter there that his eyes miraculously opened. Quite lucky of him despite selling his daughter. More importantly, couldn't he have opened his eyes sooner, but decided to deceive his daughter in order to get a free meal?

A certain someone has been quiet for a while now. Well, it's only natural.

"Zzz....."

"....."

Saeyeon had fallen asleep in less than 5 minutes.

Even if I gave her a pitying look, Saeyeon simply moved her mouth as if she were chewing on something as she continued to sleep obliviously. It was like I was the pitiful one.

She must have been feeling quite unrestrained as she was stretching her arms and legs out however she pleased. How should I say it? Should I call this an open posture? Both of her arms were stretched out and one of her legs was resting on top of my legs. Not only did she kick the blanket to the side, but her pajamas had rolled up a bit as well, revealing her defenseless stomach and navel. She scratched her stomach with one hand. Hey, isn't this a bit too unrestrained? Her pants were rolled up as well, making me turn my head away from her slender ankle bone and thigh.

Most importantly, despite all this, she didn't let go of my hand.

".....So they lived happily ever after. The end. Are you happy now?"

I closed the book with one hand and turned to ask Jaim that.

"That's weird..... This was really different to what I thought it would be like."

"What's different?"

Jaim folded her arms and tilted her head as she thought about it before answering.

"They say that when you're little, your parents read you bedtime stories. I wanted to know what it's like, so I asked you, but it's not as great as I thought it would be. It's not fun."

“Obviously, that’s because this would be fun for little kids. Do you think bedtime stories would be fun at your age?”

“There’s that, but……. Did your parents read you bedtime stories when you were little, Dad?”

“……I don’t know. I can’t remember.”

I felt like they did, but I also felt like they didn’t.

If people besides my parents count, then I feel like Saeyeon’s mom had read me and Saeyeon bedtime stories a couple of times when the two of us would sleep together.

Jaim picked up the storybook and got up after I gave her that answer.

“You didn’t come here to sleep together?”

Once I asked her that, Jaim shook her head and spoke.

“I said I came here because I couldn’t sleep. This was boring, so I’m a bit sleepy now. Ah, maybe this is why parents read kids bedtime stories?”

That was quite the convincing hypothesis. Nevertheless, did this kid really only come here to ask me to read this storybook?

“More importantly, this is a surprise, Dad. You’re sleeping with Mom.”

“A-Ack!”

Jaim smirked as she glanced at me. She continued while putting one hand in front of her mouth, making it quite easy to tell that she was teasing me.

“Certainly, I said so last time, but even without my help, you and mom were in the middle of trying to unite even without my help, right? Sorry about that. I didn’t even know. Ah, did I perhaps interrupt?”

“N-No, of course not! We were just sleeping together because it’s been a while!”

“And yet, you continued to flip the pages of the book with only one hand, right?”

“U-uuugh…….”

This brat, she's been feigning ignorance, hasn't she?

My face felt like it was getting hotter. I didn't have anything to say, so I smacked my lips and looked away. I could only hear Jaim's voice.

"In any case, thanks for playing along. Now then, I'm going to quietly, really quietly go to sleep, so wake up mom and work hard just enough that the people downstairs don't come up. Okay?"

"Shut up! Go wash your feet and go to bed!"

I wanted to throw something at her, but there was nothing within my reach, so I shooed her away with my hand. Jaim chuckled and closed the door.

"Dad?"

However, right before she shut the door completely, she turned back to look at me.

"By the way……. Thanks, for fighting them for me."

"……Don't go around getting hit by people. It's troublesome."

Jaim had already left by the time I averted my gaze and uttered those words. I let out a sigh and turned off the lamp.

"Mm……. Jjaro……."

Saeyeon's sleeping face glowed as it received the moonlight.

Her fingers wiggled as if she were making certain that I was still holding her hand properly. Her face loosened up once she was able to confirm it.

"Seriously……."

I pulled the blanket over her with one hand before shaking my head at myself.

Recently, I've been unable to treat Saeyeon like I used to.

No, naturally I wouldn't be able to treat her like I used to. I used to treat her like a complete child.

Above all else, I'm the one who forcefully made her stay innocent.

In order to not see her as a girl, in order to keep her from becoming a girl.

That's why there was no problem even if I kissed her, if we bathed together,

or even if we slept while holding hands.

But, lately…….

I can't stop my heart from beating heavily whenever I see Saeyeon's face.

The temperature of my head rise and I end up averting my gaze.

Even though nothing should have changed. The husband and wife thing is just playing house and the fact that we're living together is simply us living in a single house, but I've become strangely conscious of the fact that Saeyeon is also a girl.

Another thought comes to mind at the same time.

Future me broke up with Saeyeon because he didn't see Saeyeon as a girl.

Future me created Jihye. A robot that thought and acted like Saeyeon.

But, maybe, if that's the case.

If I created a robot that resembled Saeyeon,

then what type of person is future me exactly?

A shiver went down my spine due to an unknown fear.

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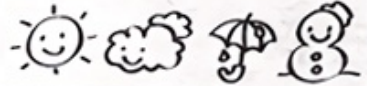
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20XX-XX-XX.

Please circle
today's weather.



Dad says that my new mom is arriving tomorrow.

I don't understand. There's only one mom, but what's a 'new' mom? Is there a new and old mom?

I don't get it. What does this mean? I know who she is. I know that she's a nice person.

But she's not my mom. And yet, she's called my new mom. I don't understand. I don't need a new mom. I want to see mom. I know I can't see her anymore, but I still want to see her.

Jjaro said this was good news, but I don't know if it's good news.

That sort of person, she's not my mom. She's an old lady. I won't call her mom.

I only have one mom. She's not my mom. When I said this, Jjaro looked sad for some reason.

Jjaro told me this.

TL note: Thanks for reading this long chapter. It turned out to be the longest chapter in the volume, so yeah. A fair amount of suffering. A lot of casual moments and Jjaro actually acting like a dad, sort of. All in all, a fair amount of progress.

I can't promise that the next chapter will be out soon due to the situation I explained at the beginning of this chapter, so please be patient. I'm just hoping nothing bad happens.

In any case, I'll see you guys in the next chapter.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 6

6. Memory

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“Well, that’s what happened.”

“I see.”

Upperclassman Nabom lifted her cup of coffee and gently closed her eyes as if she were feeling the fragrance of the coffee itself before taking a sip.

“So, did you use a condom?”

“.....You weren’t listening to me, were you?”

“Oh dear, pardon me. You said it was her safe day, didn’t you?”

“I didn’t tell you about that! Seriously, where did you hide those cameras and microphones?!”

I searched through my entire house a while ago hoping that my technical skills would be enough to find them, but in the end, I couldn’t find even one.

Upperclassman Nabom smiled at my cry with her sleepy eyes and spoke.

“In any case, you’ve changed a lot as well, Underclassman Jin Jaro. Not only

did you fight for Miss Jaim's sake, but you're gradually raising Underclassman Ja Saeyeon's affection points towards you as well."

"I didn't really raise anything."

If anything, it was maxed out from the start.

"Moreover, if you put it that way, then you're the same as well, Upperclassman Nabom."

"Today is a special service. You did keep your promise of taking me somewhere."

Upperclassman Nabom smiled as she said that. This was my first time seeing her in casual clothes. Her outfit appeared as if they were showing off the warmth of spring. Her dress shirt and cardigan, which had beautiful colors, emphasized her chest, and the mini skirt along with her bare legs and ankle boots beneath her shirt and cardigan emitted an alluring atmosphere. This person really does look great when she isn't in a school uniform.

Upperclassman Nabom noticed my gaze and winked at me with one of her half-closed eyes and teased.

"I put more of a conscious effort in my outfit because of this date."

"Of course you would."

I simply chuckled and brought my cup of coffee to my lips as well.

It was the weekend. In order to keep my promise with Upperclassman Nabom, I decided to also act as her tour guide since the two of us were already outside together. Coincidentally, Jaim went to play with Nanda, so I didn't have to worry about being accused of infidelity.

"A double date could have been fun."

She said that while smiling, but I snapped at her.

"They aren't going on a date, okay? Nanda and Jaim are simply going out to play. How could they go on a date when their age gap is so……!"

Of course, Nanda has a good personality and, if you can bear his cheesy looks, he's rather handsome. Furthermore, he's apparently going to become a

superstar in the future, so his future career is excellent as well, but still!

Upperclassman Nabom chuckled and cut me off.

“Does that mean you acknowledge this as a date?”

……Why do I get caught by leading questions so easily nowadays?

I felt my head heating up due to Upperclassman Nabom’s gaze as she brought her hands together and rested her chin on top of them while smiling, so I tilted my cup of coffee and looked away.

……Well, I didn’t consider this as a date. I seriously didn’t think of this as a date by even the smallest degree, but this may possibly be a date in its own way.

All things aside, I did come here alone with a girl and, although Nanda and Jaim have a large age gap between them, I’m only a year younger than Upperclassman Nabom.

“Then how about using this as practice and going on a date with Underclassman Ja Saeyeon next time?”

“Puah!”

“……It’s a relief that you were looking towards the side when you spat your coffee out.”

Fortunately, there was a wall next to me. While I wiped off the coffee I had spat out on the wall, I turned my head and shouted at her.

“W-Why are you assessing things so coldly? No, more importantly, what do you mean by going on a date with Saeyeon?!”

“As a result of observing you for nearly three months now, the two of you have never gone out to do something with just the two of you. Even though you two live together.”

“No, that’s because…….”

“I also came to a realization while observing you. I realized that persuading you to hurriedly unite with Underclassman Ja Saeyeon the first time I met you was a mistake. As I thought, one must adhere to the ABCs of relationship

building. Doing so would also prevent duds from being shot off like what happened to you.”

“It wasn’t a dud! I told you that we only slept while holding hands! And not in a weird way! I said we could sleep together because I had something to talk to Saeyeon about. Above all, after all this time…….”

“——…….”

“Looking away and covering your mouth while trembling is seriously unpleasant, you know?!”

Seriously, this person has a bad personality. Upperclassman Nabom spoke after wiping the tear away from her eye.

“In any case, the fact that Miss Jaim doesn’t want to go back is because there is no certainty in both of your actions, right?”

“……The future won’t change even if there was.”

My voice inadvertently went low when I said those words.

“That’s right. The future won’t change.”

“Then……!”

Upperclassman Nabom simply raised her cup of coffee and spoke.

“Nevertheless, if doing so results in Miss Jaim going back willingly, then I’m all for it.”

“…….”

I lowered my butt that was about to awkwardly get up and sat back down on my chair.

“It seems that Underclassman Jin Jaro is misunderstanding something, so I’ll explain it to you once more.”

Upperclassman Nabom put her cup down and smiled slightly.

“You probably remember, but I came here to observe so that Miss Jin Jaim doesn’t cause an **information contamination**.”

Her mouth was still smiling, but Upperclassman Nabom’s sleepy eyes became

serious as she continued.

“There shouldn’t be a need to emphasize this after all this time, but if Miss Jin Jaim causes an information contamination, then, regardless of your ‘family experiment’ or whatever, I will be taking Miss Jin Jaim back to the future. Additionally, the longer she stays here, the higher the chances are of one happening.”

Information contamination. An issue I have to worry about while looking after Jaim.

The act of traveling to the past is followed by danger. Similar to the butterfly effect, a small action could cause a large outcome. Information contamination is one of those dangers.

Everyone has memories of the past. However, those memories aren’t accurate. If you hear about something you did when you were little from a third party, then there are times when you think ‘Did I actually do that back then?’. We can only doubt it since we’re in the present and have no way to confirm whether the information is true or not.

However, if you travel back in time from the future, then you could personally confirm that doubt with your own two eyes. Thus, us humans who live in the future with our memories can only react sensitively towards that change. People consist of memories, after all. Our personalities and thinking processes are created as a result of our memories.

Upperclassman Nabom is an agent from the future who was dispatched here in order to prevent that, and although we’re cooperating, she’s in a position where she could intervene according to the situation.

Nothing particularly happened after the previous incident, so without becoming self-aware, I only remembered that she was here to simply watch Jaim.

Upperclassman Nabom swept her finger around the edge of her coffee cup and spoke.

“So I would like it if Underclassman Jin Jaro was a bit more concerned. It seems like you did well in your own way until now, but ever since Miss Jihye

arrived, there have been times when Miss Jaim's mentality became unstable. If it becomes worse, then even I would no longer be able to **turn a blind eye.**"

".....Are you plotting something again?"

Previously, the incident where Jaim was nearly dragged away by force.

Well, the fundamental reason was me, but there's no way that I could forget that Upperclassman Nabom had goaded it from behind. It was completely behind the scene. She was the worst person. Sheesh, I'm getting upset all of a sudden.

However, Upperclassman Nabom responded without erasing the smile from her face.

"Of course not. I simply said that because it seems Underclassman Jin Jaro has completely gotten used to relying on me. It's also cute when you're desperate."

This girl.....

"This also made me think that Underclassman Jin Jaro is quite innocent."

"Can you stop teasing me?"

Upperclassman Nabom watched me with amusement as I gnashed my teeth.

"Even if I were plotting something, if you consider the fact that you thought I would honestly answer with 'Yes, I am plotting something right now.' just because you asked me that question, proves my point that you truly are innocent."

My mouth ended up stopping right when I was about to say something.

"Underclassman Jin Jaro, this seems like a good opportunity, so let me tell you something nice."

Upperclassman Nabom raised her clasped hands on top of the table and spoke.

"Don't think of me as your ally."

".....What is that supposed to mean?"

Upperclassman Nabom smiled brightly.

“If necessary, I will lie and hide the truth. If it’s for the sake of my mission and goal, I’m prepared to do anything. That is what I was trained to do as an agent.”

Upperclassman Nabom continued while beaming.

“Therefore, please do not get relaxed towards me simply because I was your ally last time. Not for my sake, but for yours, Underclassman Jin Jaro.”

“.....”

As I thought, I can’t be careless around this person. This was the only thought that was going through my head.

Upperclassman Nabom put her clasped hands comfortably on top of her lap.

“Shouldn’t you be placing your trust in your family and not me, Underclassman Jin Jaro? Be it Underclassman Ja Saeyeon, Miss Jaim, and Miss Jihye. Don’t people say that your family is your greatest ally?”

“How could I talk to Saeyeon or Jaim about this?”

“I see. You are experimenting as the role of the father after all.”

Upperclassman Nabom raised her cup and spoke.

“Then I guess the only one Underclassman Jin Jaro can consider as an ally and request help from is Miss Jihye. Not only is she absolutely obedient to you, Underclassman Jin Jaro, but she’s also concerned about Miss Jaim in various ways. Additionally, isn’t she your type, Underclassman Jin Jaro? She’s pure, devoted, and will never betray you.”

“.....Are you giving me advice even though you told me to not think of you as an ally?”

“You’re right. It seems my timing was bad.”

Upperclassman Nabom continued as if she found my cautious gaze to be pleasant.

“Well, since it seems Underclassman Jin Jaro understands as well now, let’s stop here. Now then, you don’t have anything more to add to your report, right?”

Upperclassman Nabom spoke after drinking the rest of her coffee and setting

her cup down.

“.....Well, yeah. For now.”

“All right. Then let’s end the business talk here.”

After hearing my answer, Upperclassman Nabom took out a terminal that looked similar to a cell phone from her pocket and started pressing some buttons. The device emitted an audible ‘Beep’ sound as the screen went black.

The peculiar atmosphere that made it so that I couldn’t act carelessly earlier also disappeared.

“I’m simply a girl now.”

Upperclassman Nabom giggled in a way that didn’t suit her normal character.

“.....”

“So how was it? Did I make your heart beat?”

“O-Of course not. I’m not going to lower my guard.”

I missed the timing to respond. Upperclassman Nabom chuckled at my response.

“It seems I frightened you a bit too much. Still, I’m asking as a precaution, but you don’t intend to stand a girl up after having invited her out, do you?”

Upperclassman Nabom extended her hand. Seriously, she was looking at me while gently smiling with her half-opened, sleepy eyes as if she were a normal girl at least in this moment.

“.....Haa, fine. A promise is a promise.”

So I grabbed her hand.

I could feel a warmth and a palpitation in my hand. However, it felt different from when I held hands with Saeyeon. I’m not sure how exactly it was different, but it felt that way.

“Now then, let us go immediately!”

Upperclassman Nabom pulled on my hand and smiled brightly.

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“.....Uhm, didn’t we clearly make a deal that we’d only go to one place?”

Upperclassman Nabom pouted slightly due to my comment. For this person to be capable of making such a face. It’s cute because she’s doing that with her sleepy eyes.

“That’s mean of you, Underclassman Jin Jaro. Did you really intend to go to only one place and immediately part ways? That’s a bit disappointing.”

“No, well, I also didn’t plan on going to only one place, but.....”

“Then there’s no problem. I also wanted to go here and there.”

“I get it, so can you let go of my hand?”

I ran along the path while being dragged by the hand by Upperclassman Nabom.

People passing by turned to look at us.

After riding the bus and going a couple of stops, we arrived at a shopping district near a subway station.

It was a bit bigger than the shopping district in the neighborhood we went to when we went to the karaoke room, but this was around a suburb subway station that wasn’t very populated, so it wasn’t that impressive.

For starters, there’s a chain coffee store, a karaoke room and a PC room, and small clothing stores, but this girl was running through this lackluster place as if she were having a lot of fun. It’s only natural that everyone’s gazes would be attracted to her. Also to me, who was being dragged along. I’m sorry for looking so average.

I’ve become surprised to see that this person had even this side to her.

“It’s been a long time since I’ve come to this area, so I ended up getting excited. It looks exactly as it did before it was redeveloped.”

Upperclassman Nabom looked up at the unimpressive, old shopping district buildings while smiling. She looked as if she were reminiscing the past.

“Have you never come out this far?”

“There was no reason for me to come all the way here.”

Upperclassman Nabom nodded in response to my question. However, another question came to my head.

“You said that you hadn’t come here in a long time, so does that mean you used to live around this vicinity, Upperclassman Nabom?”

“I lived here for a short while when I was little. Albeit, I don’t remember it that well.”

“Then doesn’t that mean we might end up meeting you when you were little?”

Upperclassman Nabom smiled in response to my question and answered.

“Why? Are you worried about a time paradox?”

“No, you said that time paradoxes don’t happen, so that’s fine, but…….”

“So you want to see how cute I was when I was little, huh? I didn’t think that Underclassman Jin Jaro would have such an idiosyncrasy. I’m worried that you might try to unite with Miss Jaim before Underclassman Ja Saeyeon.”

“I’m going to get mad if you start making weird jokes.”

She simply laughed pleasantly despite the fact that I had said that while frowning. Was she always like this?

However, something was different enough to make even that reaction feel out of place.

“You don’t have to worry about that issue. Although there is a chance you may have seen my younger self once, I cleaned my identity while being trained as an agent. You won’t recognize my younger self even if you did see her.”

Upperclassman Nabom explained with a smile.

As if it didn't matter. As if it wasn't a big deal.

But, that's..... Did she not feel lonely?

Why was this person working as an agent at such a young age? I suddenly became curious.

"Ah, we're here. Let's go inside."

Upperclassman Nabom's sudden words and the sensation of my hand being pulled brought me back to my senses.

We went into an arcade that had not gone into ruin yet in this day and age.

"Is this broken?"

"It's fine. Ah, you didn't put money in."

"But it's not reacting even though I'm placing my credit card against it."

".....It doesn't take credit cards. Arcade machines work like this....."

Should I say that this was as expected of a person from the future? Her eyes sparkled with intrigue as she watched me demonstrate for her.

We went to a snack cart on the street that was selling spicy rice cakes.

"Mm, this is delicious. It's a bit regrettable that there isn't anything to drink, though."

"You can just drink the broth from the fish cakes. It tastes nice since it's warm."

"I see. Owner, how much for a single cup of the broth?"

".....It's free."

After receiving a cup of the fish cake broth from the owner who was looking at Upperclassman Nabom with an immensely peculiar gaze, she blew on the broth to cool it down before taking a sip. Upperclassman Nabom received an even more peculiar gaze once she said she'd pay for an entire bottle of the broth.

We visited the other street vendors and looked at a bunch of cheap brooches and hairpins.

“How do I look? Does it look good on me?”

“.....One girl with a flower in her hair is more than enough.”

“I’ll tell Underclassman Ja Saeyeon you said that next time.”

Upperclassman Nabom observed each piece of merchandise with a serious gaze as if she wanted to advertise that she was a girl and she even looked at the rings and earrings with fascination.

She said that she always wanted to go to a PC room, so we did.

“.....Why do these people keep asking questions about our parents?”

“Well, it’s a game that’s quite harsh on beginners.”

“But games are meant to be enjoyed..... This is difficult to understand.”

Well, I feel sort of at fault for having picked this game of all things.

In any case, we continued.

The promise to go to only one place had already become a distant memory and Upperclassman Nabom pulled my hand as she excitedly went around looking at everything she could with a gleam of curiosity in her eyes.

I seriously can’t make head nor tail of this person.

This was all I could understand.

One moment, you think that she has a few loose screws, but in the next moment, she becomes so sharp that you can’t act carelessly. And if you become wary of this switch, she then shows you an energetic girl-like personality.

“Now that I think about it, why do you use formal speech with me, Upperclassman Nabom?”

“You may be younger than me right now, but Underclassman Jin Jaro is an unemployed, bald, and pot-bellied old man in the time I’m from.”

For some reason, her joking words didn’t really annoy me today.

“If anything, I feel more uncomfortable because Underclassman Jin Jaro uses formal speech with me. Well, you do speak informally from time to time as well.”

“Naturally, that’s because you’re my senior.”

“I see. Because I’m your ‘senior’.”

Upperclassman Nabom ran a few steps forward, spread her arms out and span around. Her skirt fluttered and her beautiful, curly hair swayed in the wind. It was as if she were shining as she smiled brightly.

I ended up holding my breath at that sight.

We had met around lunch time, but before we knew it, it was already time for dinner.

Through the window of the bus, I could see the purple sky spread out before me as the sun went down.

“I was able to have fun today thanks to you.”

Upperclassman Nabom said that to me with a smile once we got off the bus.

“Today feels like the second time I’ve had this much fun ever since I’ve come here.”

“Was the first time the day you went to a karaoke room with Nanda Oppa?”

“.....Can you please forget about that? I was simply elated for a moment because I was meeting a famous star.”

Upperclassman Nabom’s embarrassed attitude didn’t suit her. I laughed silently.

“Will you take me somewhere next time as well?”

Upperclassman Nabom looked at me as she asked that. With a hopeful face.

So I averted my gaze away from her expression and answered.

“.....Well, as long as it isn’t within the range of being considered a date.”

“As I thought, you’re completely infatuated by Underclassman Ja Saeyeon. This is good progress.”

“That’s not it, okay? I just have no interest in dating.”

Upperclassman Nabom’s brows went down a bit because of my grumbling.

“Did you not have that much fun, Underclassman Jin Jaro?”

“.....Well, I can’t say that I didn’t have any fun.”

I’m not saying this particularly because of that sad expression. Don’t misunderstand.

“I see. Then I’ll look forward to next time.”

The corner’s of Upperclassman Nabom’s lips went up furtively once she heard my reply.

“In any case, I’ll be going home first, then. It’s time for dinner.”

“About that.”

I was about to turn around, but those words made me look back.

“Underclassman Jin Jaro.”

Upperclassman Nabom looked at me and smiled brightly.

“Would you like to come over to my place and have some ramen?”

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“.....”

“Oh dear, are you not going to have some? I’m pretty confident in my ability to cook ramen.”

No, I wasn’t particularly looking forward to coming here. I really wasn’t.

“As I expected, eggs are an essential part of ramen. It supplements the lacking proteins and also makes the ramen taste better.”

It’s just, what should I say? I was simply surprised because this person had said something so alarming in that situation. It’s not like I’m disappointed or anything either.

More importantly, it’s Upperclassman Nabom we’re talking about. She’s not someone I should be expecting these sort of things from.

We were in a studio flat a bit to the side from the bus station. Upperclassman Nabom’s home was a small room inside the flat. Apparently, she barely had enough to afford this room with the expenses she was provided when she was dispatched here.

Upperclassman Nabom tuck her ramen-like, wavy hair behind her ear and used the pot lid as a bowl as she slurped up the ramen noodles after blowing on them a bit. I don’t know whether this suited her or not.

“I went out of my way to invite you, so you should have some. The noodles will get soggy.”

“.....All right, I guess.”

What choice do I have left?

I let out a sigh and ate the portion of ramen that Upperclassman Nabom had

scooped out for me. It certainly did taste good. My thoughts must have appeared on my face as Upperclassman Nabom smiled.

“I’ve spent a lot of time by myself, so I got tired of cooking proper meals and wound up eating ramen more frequently. Ramen is the friend of people who live alone. Mankind’s greatest invention.”

“.....Sure it is.”

I was about to take my glasses off because the hot steam had fogged up the lenses, but Upperclassman Nabom handed me a tissue. I was planning to eat without my glasses on, you know?

“You look a bit better without your glasses. Have you considered changing to contact lenses?”

“Glasses are the pride of mad scientists within the scientific field.”

“I see that your roots are still the same.”

I’m definitely not being stubborn about my glasses because I’m afraid that something might go in my eyes. I’m simply wearing them because I’m nearsighted. I could only see the outline of Upperclassman Nabom’s body so I couldn’t read her face.

For a while, only the sound of slurping, Upperclassman Nabom blowing on the noodles to cool them down, and soup being drank filled the room.

“Would you like to eat rice with the soup?”

“Ah, I’ll have some.”

There were no other conversations besides these brief exchanges.

Nevertheless, I didn’t feel uncomfortable. If anything, this felt rather familiar and relaxing. Was it because we’re alone in the club room a lot? Still, something felt different.....

“If you’ve finished eating, then give me your bowl.”

“Ah, wait.”

I returned to my senses once I saw Upperclassman Nabom put the bowls in the pot and stand up. I put my glasses back on as I quickly stood up and took

the pot from her.

“What’s wrong, Underclassman Jin Jaro? Are you finally no longer able to hold back your carnal desires?”

“Don’t say weird things, okay? I’ll do the dishes.”

This was the least I could do since I had received a free meal. I went to the sink in the corner of the room before Upperclassman Nabom could stop me.

“.....Uhm, why is every single plate in the sink?”

“Because I’m lazy. The bowl that you were using earlier was the last remaining one.”

“Did you eat off the lid of the pot not because you’re a gourmet, but because you just didn’t have any more plates.....?”

I couldn’t help but let out a sigh. Well, if it’s the lifestyle of the person who absolutely hates bothersome things, then this was it. So instead of complaining, I put on the rubber gloves and started to do the dishes. I’m repaying for a bowl of ramen quite expensively.

Between the sound of the flowing water, Upperclassman Nabom’s voice came from behind me.

“Then I’ll gratefully accept your goodwill. I’ll be taking a shower, then.”

“What?!”

I was so surprised by her words which she had said as if it were the most natural thing that I turned around, but Upperclassman Nabom had already entered the bathroom and closed the door.

“.....”

What is this person thinking?

While I was standing there in shock after having been unable to even stop her, I could only hear the sound of water flowing. I then heard the rustling sound of clothes being taken off behind the thin door, and then the torrential sound of water coming out of a showerhead.

.....This is that, isn’t it? It’s that, right?

No, it's Upperclassman Nabom. The person whom I can't get head nor tail of. Her affection points towards me is 0 anyway. She's someone who enjoys teasing me. This is probably also a joke or something.

But would people normally joke about going to take a shower in a situation like this? When she invited me over, she also used that famous line of coming over to have some ramen. If that's the case, then is this……?

Even while I was washing the stockpiled dishes one at a time, my mind kept coming up to conclusions all on its own. Should I just leave? I already ate. But it would be rude if I leave arbitrarily without saying goodbye. While these thoughts went through my head, I realized I had been washing the same dish over and over again.

“…….”

After wiping the last plate and placing it on the drying rack, I hesitated on whether I should simply leave or not, but in the end, I decided to sit down and wait. No, I'm not looking forward to anything. I'm a cold scientist who isn't blinded by sexual desires. Even if I'm tempted, I'm capable of composing myself.

……Nevertheless, there really is nothing. Nothing in this room, that is.

Once I sat down meekly and looked around the room, I forgot about my situation for a moment as that thought went through my head.

A closed wardrobe. A floor table with nothing on it. A shabby vanity table. Reference books, novels, books on scientific theories, and even fairy tale books, these few books which were completely unrelated to each other made the bookshelf they were on look even more empty. On the wall, there were torn areas of the wallpaper which were most likely spots where the previous owners of the room had stuck posters on.

Even if this was a room that was rented out due to work, it was so bleak that I couldn't believe that someone has been living here for nearly 3 months now.

This was the exact opposite of Saeyeon's room.

This was an empty room that had no adorable plushies, comfortable cushions, or a TV.

Were the club room and this desolate home the only places which Upperclassman Nabom could reside in?

Just at that moment, the bathroom door opened with a 'click'.

"That was refreshing."

My head reflexively turned towards the sound.

Upperclassman Nabom came out of the bathroom while wiping her moist hair with a towel. I wonder if it was because of the hot water, but her face and skin had a peach-like tint to them. Her glamorous legs and thighs shook with each step she took, and naturally, her breasts, which were large enough to have their own universal gravitation, bounced as well. Droplets of water flowed down from her hair and around her coy navel.

In other words, she wasn't wearing anything. She wasn't even using a towel to cover her body.

"Kya! P-Put something on! Why did you come out naked?!"

I snapped my head away and shouted. I could only hear Upperclassman Nabom's voice.

"Is there a problem with me going around my own home comfortably?"

'Ah, I should drink some milk.' I heard her mutter that to herself in a small voice. I then heard the sound of the refrigerator being opened, the sound of something being poured, followed by several gulps and then a 'Puah, this is the best.' being uttered.

"No, even so……!"

I hid my reddening cheeks and was about to shout, but I stopped myself. I mean, I may also share that belief of being comfortable when in one's own home, but I at least have the common decency to wear my boxers and a t-shirt. I don't walk around completely naked.

……I should wear clothes properly from now on. Yeah. Even if Jaim is my daughter, I don't think I should go around like that. A full suit might be a bit too much, but let's wear some proper clothes after taking a shower from now on.

"Pardon me. You can turn around now."

“.....You aren’t joking, are you?”

Once I turned my head cautiously, I saw Upperclassman Nabom wearing a single wide and flabby t-shirt.No, that outfit is a bit too much as well.

“It’s the first time I’ve had a boy over, after all. I wound up acting like I always do.”

Upperclassman Nabom scratched her cheek as if she were embarrassed and sat down quietly. It was difficult to leave my eyes on her wet, crossed legs so I turned away, but it seems Upperclassman Nabom misinterpreted my action as she glanced around her room and laughed.

“It’s a bit empty, isn’t it?”

“.....Yeah.”

“I came here on a mission after all. I originally thought I would return within a month. That’s why I didn’t try to decorate anything.”

Upperclassman Nabom chuckled as she said that while looking at me. I didn’t have anything else to say, so I turned my head.

With an audible thump, the closet door fell open. A bunch of posters came rolling out.

“Ah.....”

“.....”

I picked one up and unrolled it. I was greeted by a grinning Nanda wearing a bizarre outfit. Does this guy not age? He looks the same.

“.....”

Once I gave Upperclassman Nabom a blank look, Upperclassman Nabom, who was staring at her posters vacantly, blushed furiously and shouted.

“W-What’s so bad about a young girl having posters of a famous trot star?! What?! Do you have a problem?!”

“.....No, I don’t have any problems with that.”

She was saying the exact opposite of what she had said before, but I’d feel bad if I pointed that out now. She was panicking to the point of speaking

informally as well. So this is how she normally talks, huh?

I simply let out a sigh and handed the poster over to her. Upperclassman Nabom snatched the poster away and grabbed the rest of the posters that had rolled out on the floor and shoved them back into the closet. I see. Were these the reason her wallpaper was torn……?

“Still, you’ve stayed here for a while now, so shouldn’t it be fine for you to gradually start decorating your room? Well, even with the Nanda posters.”

Upperclassman Nabom took a deep breath in response to my teasing and spoke.

“Although things have become like this because Underclassman Jin Jaro had escalated matters.”

“……I’m sorry. That was presumptuous of me.”

“Please reflect on your actions.”

Once I bowed my head and said that, Upperclassman Nabom chuckled.

“I’ll give you a TV next time. We have a spare one in our storage.”

“If it’s one of Underclassman Jin Jaro’s inventions, then I’ll refuse. I don’t want to go through the same thing I did when I used the alarm clock you recommended last time.”

I’ll elaborate. My invention ‘Throw Towards Tomorrow’ alarm clock is a device that won’t stop ringing until you throw it hard enough that it breaks apart. If you want to use it again, then you just have to reassemble its simple pieces. Upperclassman Nabom, who struggled to break it in the morning, had a big fight with her neighbor on the very first day she used the alarm clock. Thus, the next morning, she came looking for me with her eyes only a quarter open, something which I had only seen once before, and threw the clock at me. She threw it with all her strength, so it hurt…….

“Speaking of inventions.”

“Are you trying to change the topic?”

“Robot maids, am I really the one who makes them?”

“Are you going to ignore me? Well, yes, you are.”

Upperclassman Nabom, who was narrowing her eyes as if she had recalled that moment in the past, returned back to normal and nodded her head. I was honestly scared.

“They boast a degree of completion that makes it hard for me to believe that Underclassman Jin Jaro was the one who made them, so, within half a year of the first model being sold, you sold over 5 million models worldwide. Afterward, you actually had a monopoly of the entire market.”

“O-Oooh……!”

“A unique function which befits Underclassman Jin Jaro’s mechanophilic tendencies is one of their distinct features.”

“R-Really?! T-Then there’s a new world underneath……?!”

“……This may be abrupt, but you look like utter trash right now, Underclassman Jin Jaro. I honestly feel uncomfortable, so could you leave?”

“I-I was just curious as a scientist.”

It was a joke. Yup, a joke. I’m not excited.

Upperclassman Nabom let out a sigh and spoke.

“In any case, I believe that you won’t order her to do something like that just because I told you that she’s your ally. You also have a conscience, right?”

“It was a joke…….”

“There’s also the fact that she resembles Underclassman Ja Saeyeon.”

“…….”

My lips stopped moving once I heard those words which were said with a smile. This person, how does she know?

“More importantly, how long do you intend to stay here?”

Upperclassman Nabom turned around and asked me that. With her usual tone.

“It should be fine for you to leave now since you’ve finished eating the ramen.

Ah, were you perhaps looking forward to something? Have you finally heated up due to my charm? This is troubling. For a person who already has a wife and daughter to ultimately grab the hand of infidelity…….”

So I was also able to respond with my normal tone.

“Stop saying weird things! Rather, did you really invite me over just to eat ramen?”

“As I thought, you really were expecting something. For you to not unite with your wife but try to unite with another woman instead. Truly, you’re a wicked man, Underclassman Jin Jaro. I’m worried about Underclassman Ja Saeyeon and Miss Jaim.”

“I told you that’s not it!”

“Well, I understand your desire to truly have a ‘physical relationship’ with me, but didn’t we already have one? If you go any further than this, then it’ll genuinely become infidelity.”

“I don’t have such desires, okay? We never had that sort of relationship either. Moreover, why do you like saying ‘infidelity’ so much?!”

Upperclassman Nabom approached me slightly as if she were teasing me and continued.

“Of course, that’s because there’s no subject matter more fun than teasing Underclassman Jin Jaro. Now then, what were you hoping for when I invited you over to eat ramen?”

While at a distance where our noses nearly touched, Upperclassman Nabom grinned at me. Can you do something about your habit of bringing your face close when you’re excited? Is this a normal reaction in the future? Jaim does this sometimes as well.

“Haa……. I’ll be going home, then.”

Once I let out a sigh and stood up, Upperclassman Nabom nodded.

“All right. Return safely. Today was fun.”

“Is messing with me that fun?”

Upperclassman Nabom responded to my complaint by smiling furtively and speaking.

“Of course, that’s because you’re the only person I can mess around with, tease, and be friendly around.”

“.....”

My hand paused as it was about to open the front door.

Her teasing words were said in her usual voice. A tone that purely had a slight friendliness to it as if she were messing around with her cute junior.

However, just now, that was definitely.....

I inadvertently looked back this time as well, but once I did, slightly different from last time, Upperclassman Nabom was simply waving her hand at me with a smile.

“.....See you at school.”

Really, I can’t tell if I have a grasp of this person or not.

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The sun had already set completely by the time I left the studio flat. The night air was chilly. I adjusted my collar and decided to head home.

This was a lot later than I had expected. I originally planned to go back home right when the sun started to set at the latest. I left Saeyeon and Jihye at home all day. I wonder what the two of them did in order to pass the time and stave off boredom. Should I buy some snacks for Saeyeon on my way home?

“.....Sniff.”

“Uah, that scared me!”

So I was nearly scared to death when someone crouched next to the entrance of the studio flat made that noise. They were in a dark place so I didn’t even know they were there.

“.....Why are you there?”

Although I became twice as surprised once I realized who it was.

In a corner where the light couldn’t reach that well. It was already a dark spot, so their black clothes made them even harder to see. Jihye, who was crouched down with her arms folded, sniffed and looked up at me with glum eyes before answering my question.

“You were late and you didn’t contact us, so I was waiting for you, Master.”

“What? How did you know I would be here?”

Jihye pouted slightly at my question and turned her head away.

“You said you were going to hang out with Miss Nabom today, didn’t you? You weren’t coming home, so I figured if I waited here, I’d at least be able to meet Miss Nabom.”

Certainly, I kept it a secret from Jaim, but I told Saeyeon and Jihye where I was going today. There's a chance Saeyeon might misunderstand if she finds out later, after all. It was honestly unexpected when Saeyeon smiled and told me to have fun with 'Big Sis Nabom'.

"Then you should have come up. Why'd you stay here?"

Jihye squirmed because of my words and mumbled in response.

".....Because, I don't know, the passcode for the entrance....."

".....Ah."

Modern technology is great. In order to prevent burglars from entering, you aren't able to enter the building itself unless you enter a passcode at the entrance. Our place doesn't have something like this. Instead, we have a security guard watching the entire complex.

Jihye responded while sniffing.

"I was planning to follow whoever goes in, but no one came out..... Someone finally came out, so I was about to go in, but they saw my outfit and started asking questions because they thought I was a suspicious person, so I ran away and came back later."

"It's time for you to come to terms with the fact that your maid outfit doesn't fit in this current age."

"But, if a robot maid doesn't wear a maid costume, then they'd just be a robot..... This is like my pride."

Why would a robot have something like that?

Once I let out a sigh, Jihye stood up. I heard the sound of plastic bags rustling as she did.

"Be honest. You were buying groceries, but you got lost on your way back, so while you were asking around, you came here because you remembered Upperclassman Nabom lived here, right?"

"N-No. I came here looking for you, Master."

"All right, all right. I'll hold a bag. Let's go home."

Jihye panicked once I snatched a plastic bag filled with groceries from one of her hands.

“Master, holding the luggage is my job. I can hold it, so you don’t have to worry.”

“If I let a girl hold everything, then I’ll be seen as a cold-hearted bastard, you know? It’s fine, so just follow me properly.”

After I walked past Jihye who still didn’t know what to do after what I had told her, she followed after me with short and quick steps. She walked beside me.

“So, how long have you been waiting?”

“.....About an hour.”

So her timing was bad. She got here right after Upperclassman Nabom and I entered her place.

“Then is Saeyeon by herself at home right now? What about Jaim?”

Jihye held her plastic bag with both hands and shook her head.

“She hasn’t come home yet.”

“.....That Nanda. He should be sending her home early since she’s still a kid.”

“Mr. Shin Nanda called earlier. He said that the two of them are going to have dinner before going home. He said it couldn’t be helped because Miss Jaim asked.”

“.....That Jaim. She’s still a kid, so she should come home early.”

Now that I think about it, it feels like there’s a higher chance that Jaim is seriously going after Nanda than Nanda is going after Jaim. Although I won’t allow either to happen even if dirt were to go into my eyes. Even if it’s Nanda.

“In any case, so Saeyeon is by herself at home, huh.....”

Once my expression unknowingly became dark, Jihye responded immediately.

“What’s wrong, Master? Is it because of the Missus?”

“It’s because Saeyeon isn’t particularly used to being by herself. Did she say anything when you went out?”

“No. She only said to have a safe trip. Although I am a bit late…….”

Jihye seemed to start worrying as well because of my concern as she covered her mouth with one hand and looked as if she were thinking. Should I give her a call? I took out my cell phone.

“Hello?”

“Saeyeon?”

“Ah, Jjarro! You should have called sooner. I was worried.”

Just as I predicted, her voice sounded dark, but it instantly became bright the instant she confirmed it was my voice. Like I said, she revives way too quickly. I unintentionally let out a soundless laugh.

“I met Jihye and we’re on our way home right now. We’ll be there soon.”

“I was worried because Miss Jihye wasn’t coming home even though she said she was going to buy groceries, so I thought she got lost again, but she was with Jjarro, huh?”

“…….”

Once I looked at Jihye while making my emotions visible, Jihye must have also heard Saeyeon’s voice as she quickly turned her head away. Well, whatever.

“At any rate, I forgot to call. As an apology, I’ll buy some snacks on my way home. Is there something you want to eat?”

“Then……. Ice cream!”

“Okay. Then wait while watching TV. I’m hanging up now.”

After hearing Saeyeon’s reply, I put my cell phone back in my pocket. Saeyeon has changed a lot as well, huh. If things were like before, then she would have whined that she was bored or fret about being scared. I felt a gaze, so I turned to see Jihye staring right at me.

“What’s wrong?”

“No, I just thought that Master and the Missus got along well.”

“Well, we did know each other for a long time.”

“You look happy.”

“Because it feels like Saeyeon has grown up a little as well.”

Saying this myself felt humorous, so I smiled bitterly. Who knew that I would say something like this?

“.....But, it’s regrettable.”

Jihye made a slightly gloomy face and spoke.

“For you to split up from that Missus in the future.”

“.....Yeah.”

I think I did what I could to smile bitterly.

If the future doesn’t change, then regardless of whether Saeyeon matures or how I accept it, Saeyeon will be gone from our home.

Instead, in that home which I don’t even go back to, Jaim and.....

I turned my head and looked at Jihye.

“What’s the matter?”

Jihye blinked as she tilted her head.

The more I look at her, the more I’m made to realize that I had made her.

Her blinking must have been done in order to make her truly seem like a person. A person who doesn’t blink would be scary, after all. They would give off an uncanny valley feeling as well.

(TL note: Uncanny valley is a theory where people feel more repulsion towards humanoids that are awkwardly human-like. [LINK](#))

When she sniffs because it’s cold, pats down her chest whenever she’s surprised, and stutters from time to time, all of these lifelike responses.

These sort of trivial responses must have been needed for my goal, after all.

And, the more I look at her,

The more I feel like she resembles Saeyeon.

They give off a similar atmosphere. Despite being somewhat dopey, there’s definitely an atmosphere that stimulated other people’s protective desires.

Their personalities are similar. They're normally air-headed, but they're sharp when it comes to weird things, and they get concerned about what other people do.

Their sociabilities are also similar. They're able to talk to anyone with ease and they don't think that's strange.

Their actions are similar as well. That humming right now, the way they respond when they're surprised, their somewhat sloppy behaviors, and the way they respond when they're embarrassed.

I understand why Upperclassman Nabom said that Jihye is my ally. Because she's like Saeyeon. Just like Saeyeon, she'll most likely never betray me.

Of course, there are other facts. And those other facts are,

.....The parts, that I had taken away from Saeyeon until now.

I was made to realize, to a painful degree, the fact that I was the one who had created her.

I also realized how much of a twisted person my future and current self were.

I probably created my ideal form of Saeyeon.

Innocent, dopey, but kind. A sociability that allowed her to become friends with anyone. A Saeyeon who could do housework and everything outside of that by herself, listen to whatever I tell her to do and stop a fight with a smile on her face while also giving her regards to the kids who were harassing her daughter.

And even while doing all that, she was a girl and not a child. A Saeyeon who gets embarrassed if you see inside her clothes or take her stockings off.

If I didn't make Saeyeon stay like a child until now, wouldn't she have become like this?

Furthermore, of all things, after breaking up with Saeyeon, I made the robot maid who stayed at home and looked after Jaim resemble Saeyeon.

".....If Saeyeon were like you, then Jaim might not have attempted to come here."

I could only laugh bitterly. How reckless was the future me?

“Pardon? What do you mean?”

Jihye, who had no way of knowing what I meant, simply blinked and asked that.

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“.....What’s that supposed to mean, Dad?”

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And an incredibly cold voice, made me turn my head.

We were on an unpopulated pathway within the apartment complex that leads to home. Jaim was there and glaring at me.

She must have really considered her outing with Nanda as a date as she was wearing clothes that were fancier and cuter than what she wore when we all went to Yongsan together. However, she currently didn’t look like she had a fun time.

While clenching her fists, she glared at me with her large eyes that were shimmering so much that it felt like they might start shining.

Nanda, who was standing beside her, was going back and forth between blankly staring at me, Jihye, and Jaim.

“Ah, Miss! Are you coming home now? Did you have a fun time on your date with Mr. Nanda?”

It seems she couldn’t read the mood as Jihye simply approached Jihye while smiling. However, Jaim brushed past her and glared at me as she stood directly before me.

“.....Miss?”

“What did you say just now, Dad?”

“No, Jaim, what I meant is.....”

“If it weren’t mom, but that piece of scrap metal instead, I wouldn’t have..... come here?”

I messed up. She misunderstood me completely.

“That’s now that I mean. What I said just now…….”

I did whatever I could to explain myself, but Jaim simply bit her lips and glared at me. There were even tears forming at the edge of her eyes.

“J-Jaim? Jjaro probably didn’t mean it like that.”

Nanda spoke gently as if he were trying his best to calm her down. However, Jaim didn’t turn away despite those words.

“Miss, I don’t know why you’re acting like this, but Master…….”

“……It’s because of you!”

The instant Jihye placed her hand on Jaim’s shoulder, Jaim shook it off. Jihye opened her eyes wide.

“Miss?”

“Finally……. I was finally able to leave that place……! I, finally had the family that I wanted……! But, again, Dad……!”

Jaim, whose body was trembling in order to stop her tears from flowing, pushed Jihye aside and shouted as loud as she could.

“Something like you, should just go to a scrap metal dump!”

Jaim ran off.

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20XX-May-28th Rainy

Please circle
today's weather.



Miss Jihye is amazing. Is it because she's a robot?

She's capable of doing housework readily and she's able to become friends with anyone with ease. When we go out together to get groceries for the sake of my wife training, the old ladies and uncles already recognize her and they greet her first. They even give her discounts.

She gets lost easily, but even then, she doesn't panic or get scared. If anything, she naturally asks for directions from the people around her and finds her way home. She asks for directions while smiling, and thanks them while smiling.

She knows more than me and she probably also knows about the thing that Jjaro is definitely trying to hide from me.

I'm a bit jealous. I want to be good at everything like that as well.

I heard that Miss Jihye is a robot that Jjaro made in the future.

As I thought, does Jjaro like these sort of people?

Is that why that happens?

TL note: Thanks for reading the chapter. Fortunately for me, this chapter was shorter than the previous, so it didn't take me as long to translate it. Albeit, I was a bit slow due to the personal reasons I mentioned in the TL note at the beginning of the previous chapter. I hope that I can finish this volume before the end of this month, but I somehow doubt I'll be able to.

I'll be starting university again this September, so I'm unsure as to how my schedule will change. If I can somehow give myself some free periods between classes, then I'll most likely translate during those times. I'm also planning to buy a laptop just for this purpose. I doubt I'll be able to use a computer in a computer lab reliably due to it usually being crowded, so I might as well have my own personal laptop with me. Just got to save up first.

In any case, hopefully, I'll get the next chapter out soon. I'll see you guys then.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 7

7. Quarrel

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“Uhm, Miss Jihye? Jaim probably didn’t mean it that way.”

“No……. That was most likely the Miss’ true feelings…….”

Despite Saeyeon’s consoling words, Jihye simply answered in a low voice as she sniveled while fully inside of the cardboard box which she usually went into to recharge.

“It would be better, if something like me, were thrown into a scrap metal dump and turned into a frying pan or a pot…….”

Due to the hurtful words which, different to all of the previous malicious words until now, sounded as if Jaim truly wished for Jihye to go die somewhere, Jihye had become completely crestfallen.

And I was…….

“Jaim, I told you it’s not like that!”

“Shut up! I don’t even want to look at you, Dad!”

……I was undergoing a similar situation as I pounded on the door of Jaim's room.

Once I got home after following after Jaim, she had already locked her door and was staging a sit-in in her room. I asked Saeyeon, who was worried because she had just witnessed Jaim abruptly come home while crying and Jihye and I come home in a hurry, to watch Jihye's condition as she was so crestfallen that the mere fact she was able to follow me home was praiseworthy.

I intended to pacify Jaim while Saeyeon was doing that, but…….

"It was my mistake, so come out and have a talk with your dad, okay?"

Although I knocked on the door as gently as possible so it wouldn't seem like I was yelling at her, there was no response.

Instead, the door opened. For a moment, I thought that she finally wanted to talk.

"W-Wait a second, calm down! What do you plan on doing with that?!"

However, I could only let out a startled cry due to the object that was being held in Jaim's hand.

I put my hands underneath Jaim's arms as she was about to go to my room with a hammer in her hand, and pulled her back into her room before Saeyeon could see. Jaim struggled and shouted.

"Let go! I'll break her apart! Who cares about Multi!"

"I told you to calm down! You don't have to go that far, do you?"

"I don't have to go that far?"

Jaim stopped struggling and turned around to face me in reaction to my words which I had said in order to calm her down.

"Of course not. That thing is probably more important to you than me or mom."

Cold eyes. The tone of her voice was lathered with sarcasm.

"It's a family experiment anyway, and since that piece of scrap metal is the robot maid that you wanted so much and had also created, it's quite your ideal,

isn't it?"

".....I told you it's not like that."

"What do you mean it's not?!"

Jaim shouted as loud as she could while glaring at me who was being silent.

"Then what? What did you mean earlier, Dad?"

"I'm sorry about what I said, but that's not....."

"You're not sorry. In the end, you're admitting to being that sort of person."

Jaim retorted coldly with the same spiteful gaze which she had once shown before when she talked about my future self.

"In the end, mom and I aren't important to you, Dad. Your work and job are important. The only reason you helped me last time, fought for my sake, was because you purely wanted to pretend to be a family and you only acted as if you got along with mom because you wanted me to quickly leave, right?"

"I told you that's wrong!"

I know that I'm in the wrong, but I got annoyed by her attitude of not even wanting to listen to me, so I wound up raising my voice. Jaim narrowed her eyes further.

I brought my voice back down so I could continue trying to soothe her and spoke.

".....Did you, also know that Jihye resembles Saeyeon?"

"I don't know something like that. I don't want to know either."

Jaim retorted coldly to my words.

"I'm not even curious as to what you had in mind when you made that thing. Regardless, despite that.....!"

After wiping the corner of her eyes once, Jaim opened her red eyes.

"How, how could you say something like that? How could you compare that sort of scrap metal with mom?!"

"Like I said, can you stop acting like this? Listen to me for a second."

Jaim shook her head.

“There’s nothing to listen to. It’d just be an excuse anyway.”

Certainly, it may be an excuse.

But…….

“Regardless, listen when someone speaks! You can get mad or whatever after you’ve heard me out!”

“…….”

Jaim’s mouth fell open slightly in reaction to my voice which I had raised inadvertently.

I didn’t want to raise my voice like this.

“Why are you only looking at things with a slanted view? I told you that you’re mistaken!”

Even though it was both the current me and the future me who had a slip of the tongue and was in the wrong.

I tried to restrain myself, but an incomprehensible irritation made me raise my voice.

No, this wasn’t what I wanted to talk about. The frustration of being unable to properly voice my thoughts made me scratch the back of my head roughly.

“I just thought that, if Saeyeon was good at housework like Jihye, and more mature than now, then we probably wouldn’t have broken up and you wouldn’t have had to go out of your way to come here…….”

I realized something in the middle of my spiel.

What I was saying right now, was exactly what Jaim had been worried about.

However, words which had already been spoken couldn’t be taken back. More importantly, I couldn’t organize the words that I wanted to say.

I was definitely the person who had made Jihye like this. Me. To resemble Saeyeon, but be more ideal as well. However, I didn’t want to unload these sort of thoughts onto Jaim.

“.....So you’re just saying you like that thing more than mom.”

And, in response to my words, Jaim spoke in a tone even colder than before.

“In the end, you’re saying that piece of scrap metal would be better for your family experiment than mom.”

“I told you that’s not what I meant!”

This is frustrating. I know I’m only fanning the misunderstanding. However, I can’t just say everything that’s on my mind. Additionally, I don’t have the eloquence to make her not misunderstand.

I didn’t want to argue. Like a dad, I wanted to skillfully resolve the misunderstanding and reconcile, but.

“What I mean is, if Saeyeon becomes like Jihye, then we might become the family that you..... Ack!”

“That isn’t, **the sort of family** that I want!”

In response to my words, Jaim threw her game console at me and shouted at the top of her lungs.

The portable game console that I had once fixed.

The portable game console that I had bought for Jaim.

It flew through the air and collided against my head before rolling on the ground. My head throbbed. I felt a dull pain.

“Why are you concerned about that thing when mom and I are here?!”

Jaim must have been unable to quell her frustration as she slammed her fist against her bed repeatedly as she spoke.

“You and mom reconciled after that fight, grandma and grandpa welcomed me, you started to worry about me more than before, and your relationship with mom gradually got better....., so I thought everything would be fine!”

Jaim wrapped her arms around her knees and lowered her head.

“But ever since that piece of scrap metal showed up, you started caring about that piece of scrap metal!”

Her body trembled, her voice was soaked, and she was most likely burying her face in her knees because she didn't want to show me her face.

Jaim yelled at me who couldn't muster to say anything.

"Why are you thinking about mom while looking at that piece of scrap metal when mom is here? How can you think of her as mom's replacement? Even though you don't know what I went through in the future and with what intention I came here for, how could you say that I probably wouldn't have come here if mom was like that sort of scrap metal? After coming here, I, I……!"

It seems she finally couldn't endure it any longer as Jaim went silent for a moment while only her shoulders trembled. I simply averted my gaze because I could hear silent weeping.

I wanted to at least embrace Jaim's shaking shoulders, but…….

"I'm, not going back."

Before I could even reach my hand out, Jaim spoke quietly.

"Everything would be the same even if I go back. Nothing would have changed."

I held my breath because of those words. A question wound up slipping through my lips.

"You…… knew?"

Jaim raised her face and answered.

"It obviously doesn't make sense if you think about it a little. If you and mom don't break up because I came to the past, then I wouldn't have had a reason to come here."

Jaim rubbed her reddened eyes and glared daggers at me.

"So I'm not going back to that house."

As if she were telling that to herself. As if she were declaring that to me.

Jaim stood up and spoke while clenching her fists.

"Mom is here, you don't worry about only your work, and you don't condescendingly attach that thing to me here. I like it here."

“But, your school and your life there…….”

“I don’t care about those things!”

Jaim shook her head and shouted.

“If I go back, then I’d be back at square one! You won’t care about anything that happens to me, mom will be gone, and that piece of scrap metal which you had snobbily stuck to me will get friendly with me thinking she’s a part of my family! Going around acting like it would be fine if she replaced mom!”

I couldn’t say anything in response as she continued.

The only thought that went through my mind was ‘I knew it’.

“I hate the very fact that, that thing pretends to be my mom and acts like she’s a part of my family!”

……As I thought, this kid, her thought process is as twisted as mine.

Since her reason was similar to why I had once hated Saeyeon.

Saeyeon, who went around acting as if she were a part of my family.

Jihye, who acted as if she were a part of her family.

It didn’t matter what reason they had for acting like they were our family. We hated it for that very reason. An existence that wasn’t even a part of our family, but acted as if they were our family simply because we didn’t have one.

We hate sympathy. We hate the very act of being pitied.

I couldn’t say even a single thing about the way Jaim treated Jihye.

Jihye truly wasn’t someone I had left Jaim in the care of because I was worried about Jaim. She was someone I had stuck her to in order to act like I was worried. I could tell just by looking at them. I considered that much to be fine. I regarded this as being enough.

Because someone is with her, taking care of her, she feels even more alone.

There was no way she would like her.

I know. It was probably because of this sort of reason. Since she’s like me.

“Of course, at first, since you were the one who told me, I thought that you

brought a robot to look after me because you cared about me.”

Jaim bit her lips and spoke.

“She’s not my mom, but since she’s looking after me like a mom, I tried to get along with her, or at the very least, obey her as much as she worried about me. Because, you were worried about me, so in order to not make you worry.”

‘But,’ Jaim’s lips trembled as she mumbled.

“But, that’s not my mom! She’s not!”

Jaim yelled as she shook her head.

“How could you tell me to think of a robot, which you made to resemble mom, as my mom after you had broken up with her? How could you pretend to care about me by doing that? Dad, how could you……?!”

These words weren’t being directed towards my current self. She was saying it to my future self. She was talking as if I was the one who had said those words.

Did my current self appear like that to Jaim?

But, because of this…….

“…….”

I couldn’t say anything.

Explaining to Jaim what I felt and realized when I looked at Saeyeon was impossible. Persuading Jaim to stop hating Jihye was impossible.

Because I had already said those words.

And, since I’m the parent who had made and assigned the very robot she hated so much to her. The robot who acted like it was a part of her family and as if it were her mother.

Furthermore, Jaim now also knew that, of all things, I had made the robot resemble her mom who had left.

“……If you don’t have anything more to say, then get out of my room.”

Jaim looked at me for a moment before turning away as she said that to me

who was being silent. She pulled her blanket over her head as if she didn't have anything more to say and laid down on her bed.

I left the room and closed the door behind me.

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“Jjaro.”

Once I exited the room, Saeyeon called out to me hesitantly.

“Uhm, you might not want to talk about it, but……. Why did you fight with Jaim? Why is Miss Jihye so depressed?”

Saeyeon asked while worryingly as the ends of her gathered fingers fidgeted.

“……It’s nothing. It isn’t a big issue.”

So I couldn’t say anything.

Saeyeon looked troubled because of my answer and spoke.

“But…….”

“I said it’s okay. You don’t have to worry.”

If I want to explain to Saeyeon the reason why I had an argument with Jaim, then I would have to tell her about what happens in the future. If that happens, then I would have to tell her about how we break up. About Jihye as well.

I couldn’t do that.

I patted Saeyeon’s head and asked.

“More importantly, what about Jihye? Is she a bit better now?”

“Hm? Ah, yeah……. I comforted her as best as I could and she fell asleep.”

Saeyeon seemed to have noticed my obvious attempt to change the topic as she appeared disappointed for a moment, but she still nodded her head and answered.

I turned my head and noticed that Jihye had certainly gone into charging mode inside of the cardboard box. It seems Saeyeon interpreted this as falling

asleep.

“How about Jaim? Did you calm her down well?”

“.....No, I’m going to need a little more time.”

I don’t know if this is an issue that’ll be resolved through time, but similar to myself, I want to believe that Jaim will get better once her head cools down. Saeyeon nodded in response to my answer and spoke.

“Then Jjaro, what if I have a talk with Jaim?”

“You will, Saeyeon?”

“Yeah. You asked me yourself, Jjaro. You asked me to help you make Jaim and Miss Jihye reconcile. I’m the mom, after all. If I have a talk with her, then she might stop being mad.”

Saeyeon clenched her fist and smiled as if she were brimming with confidence.

“If I have a talk with her, then I might be able to convince Jaim that Miss Jihye is her second mom.”

“.....Saeyeon, are you fine with that?”

“Huh?”

Saeyeon tilted her head at my words which I had accidentally blurted out. As if she didn’t understand what I meant. Obviously. I shook my head and spoke.

“No, I’ll have a proper talk with her and calm her down myself. You don’t have to worry about it, Saeyeon.”

“But.....”

“It’s fine. I said you don’t have to worry.”

If possible, I don’t want to involve Saeyeon in this. Whether Saeyeon finds out about the truth or what I end up saying in the future, both options are bad. Even more so if there’s the danger that Saeyeon might use her sharp senses which she occasionally utilizes whenever I’m involved.

“.....Stupid Jjaro.”

However, in response to my answer, Saeyeon pouted and raised the corner of her eyes.

“Huh?”

She looked as if she were sulking, no, if anything, she looked like she was blatantly advertising the fact that she was upset. Even though she was being cautious up until now, what’s up with her all of a sudden?

“You clearly said so before, didn’t you, Jjaro? You said that you need me. But why are you talking as if you don’t need me all of a sudden?”

“No, it’s not like…….”

“If we’re a family, then we should work together as a family in order to solve our issues, shouldn’t we? Furthermore, it’s an issue that involves our daughter, so no matter how you look at it, it’s bad that you’re trying to take care of everything all by yourself, Jjaro! Bad!”

Saeyeon’s strong voice, which was different from her usual tone, startled me and made me take a step back. Saeyeon let out a ‘hmph’ after seeing my blank gaze and went over to where Jihye was before removing the cardboard box.

“Ja Saeyeon?”

“Mm……. Huh, Madam?”

Jihye must have sensed that something was happening in her surroundings as she looked up at Saeyeon and muttered in a drowsy voice as she hadn’t recharged completely yet. Saeyeon spoke while pulling on Jihye’s arm.

“Miss Jihye, get up. We’re going out for a bit.”

“Pardon? But it’s still…… night time?”

Despite having been crestfallen a little earlier, Jihye tilted her head in confusion. Saeyeon forcefully pulled Jihye up and continued.

“Follow me anyways. Bring the bare minimum of your stuff.”

“Huh? ……Ah, don’t tell me, Madam, do you really intend to throw me out?!”

Jihye became bewildered. She opened her eyes wide and clung onto Saeyeon’s leg.

“M-Madam! Please don’t throw me out! I was joking about becoming a frying pan or a pot! You won’t get a lot even if you sell me!”

“I’m not throwing you out. We’re going back to my parents’ place for a while.”

“.....What?”

I was simply watching them up until this moment, but those words woke me up from my stupor. Her parents’ place? Go back? Saeyeon turned back towards me and stuck her lips out.

“If you’re going to do whatever you want, Jjaro, then I’m going to do whatever I want as well!”

“Wait, why are things turning out like this?”

While ignoring Jihye who was still utterly confused, Saeyeon went to her room and answered my question once she finished packing some of her clothes.

“You don’t try to work together even though we’re a family! I’m disappointed! Jaim probably doesn’t want to be with Miss Jihye, so we’re going to go back to my parents’ place together. You can come and find me once you’ve made up with Jaim, Jjaro. Hmph!”

“No, wait, you haven’t answered my question.”

“Now then, let’s go, Miss Jihye!”

“Madam? Wait a moment, I’m Master’s.....”

Saeyeon dragged Jihye out the front door and closed it behind her before I could do anything to stop her. I could hear footsteps and the two of them speaking in the hallway for a moment before I heard the neighbors’ door open, in other words, Saeyeon’s place.

“What’s up with her all of a sudden.....?”

Normally, no matter how upset she was, Saeyeon wouldn’t behave like this. Was she that upset? What does she intend to do?

“.....What’s with all the noise?”

While I was idiotically sitting by the front door, I heard Jaim’s voice from

behind. The tone of her voice still clearly sounded mad.

“.....Saeyeon and Jihye left.”

Jaim laughed weakly in response to my answer.

“In the end..... mom left again.”

‘In the end’, ‘again’, I didn’t understand the situation yet, but at the very least, those words were enough to send a stabbing pain through my chest.

The scale of the fight wasn’t as big as last time. However, once more, Saeyeon got upset at me and went back to her home. Even though I wanted to prevent this from happening again. Even though I didn’t want this to happen twice.

I was abandoned once more. This was only a family experiment, but I was abandoned by my family.

However, instead of shock, my body felt as if it were being held down by helplessness this time. Because it was my fault. Because it was my fault this time as well.

Nevertheless, I couldn’t tell Saeyeon. I couldn’t tell her that we broke up, that I had a fight with Jaim because I made Jihye, a robot maid that resembled Saeyeon, after Saeyeon had left.

I turned towards Jaim and spoke in order to cool down my own annoyance towards myself.

“.....It seems she left so that we could talk. Since things have turned out like this, we have no other choice but to properly......”

Bang, the door to Jaim’s room shut closed. This probably meant that she had nothing to say.

That fact made my chest throb once more.

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“.....”

“.....”

The morning breakfast table was filled with only silence.

If you think about it, this is the first time Jaim and I had a meal with just the two of us. However, this fact felt much too heavy.

In the end, Saeyeon really didn't come back. Of course, Jihye as well.

It was almost like the time I told her that I hated her.

The grains of rice felt like grains of sand in my mouth, so it was even a struggle to chew. I wasn't able to get a wink of sleep last night so the fatigue made my appetite disappear as well.

“.....Are you going to come to school?”

I was barely able to utter that question. Jaim glared at me.

“Why? So you can tell everyone that you don't need something like me like last time?”

Ice-cold words. Words meant to hurt me.

“You know that's not what I meant.”

“Nope. I don't know. Wasn't I a bothersome existence to you, Dad? You've been trying to chase me out since day one.”

Her sarcastic tone. It hurt more because those words weren't particularly untrue.

“.....That was a long time ago, it's not like that now.”

“What do you mean it's not like that?!”

Clang, Jaim dropped her spoon so that it would make an audible sound before shouting.

“I’m just a burden to you anyways, right?! You’re saying that it would be great if I disappeared! Both you and mom!”

I was surprised by her tone that didn’t even try to hide her annoyance.

“No, Saeyeon didn’t…….”

“She left without saying anything to me, didn’t she?”

I was about to say that that was because of me to Jaim, who was on the brink of tears, but Jaim shot up from her chair and went to her room.

“No matter what you and mom are planning, I’m not leaving!”

I couldn’t say anything in response to Jaim’s actions as she slammed the door shut with a booming ‘bang’.

……This can be interpreted like this, huh? My mouth was dry, so I drank some water.

It’s not like I don’t understand Jaim’s feelings. The fact that I said she wouldn’t have had to come here and the fact that Saeyeon left without saying anything to her, both of these things must have upset her.

I let out a deep sigh due to my frustration.

If I think about it, she went silent like this when Jihye first arrived as well. Albeit only for a few days.

At that time, it was at the point of only being troubling, but now it made my chest ache.

I didn’t want for things to turn out like this. I wanted to at least solve the issue a bit better like a dad should.

“……Then, I’ll be heading to school.”

“…….”

As I expected, no response came when I said that after carefully knocking on Jaim’s door. I let out another sigh and opened the front door. I went over to Saeyeon’s place and knocked on the door. With a vague hope.

“Ja Saeyeon, let’s go to school.”

“Ah, Master…….”

And the person to open the door and respond wasn’t Saeyeon or her parents, but Jihye. With a crestfallen face, Jihye spoke cautiously.

“Uhm, the Missus went to school saying that she’ll be going first.”

“……Already?”

This was 30 minutes earlier than usual. Normally, she would still be asleep around this time.

“Does she not even want to see me……?”

I could only smile bitterly. I could feel that she didn’t particularly want to run into me. I let out a small sigh.

“……Uhm, Master?”

Jihye carefully called out to me as she was watching me, so I raised my head. Jihye continued hesitantly.

“As I thought, is the Miss really upset?”

“……Well, it seems so.”

She was probably as upset at Jihye as she was with me. She did say that she was going to destroy Multi. Now that I think about it, Multi might be destroyed by the time I get home. I can only hope that that doesn’t happen.

……For me to worry about Multi in this situation. Seriously, people like me are…….

“So she really is…….”

Jihye became even more crestfallen due to my answer, but I couldn’t think of anything to say that could comfort her, so I didn’t say anything at all.

“Am I a needless existence to the Miss?”

“That’s……. I don’t think so.”

My answer became slightly hesitant. Jihye muttered weakly.

“A home appliance becoming a substitute family member is impossible, isn’t

it?”

“.....”

I couldn't find an answer to that question.

“.....Pardon me. You should be on your way to school now.”

Jihye bowed courteously. This was probably her way of ending the conversation politely. I gave her a nod.

“.....Haa.”

On my way to school by myself. I don't even know how many times I've sighed now.

Our family had collapsed in a slightly different way than before. Despite this definitely not being a collapse as inevitable as last time, it didn't make me feel any more relieved.

“.....Obviously, this is my fault, but.....”

I know that, similar to last time, this all happened because of my slip of the tongue, but.....

At the very least, that isn't what I meant this time. Though, I'm not confident that I could properly explain myself to someone.

A lot of thoughts were going through my head, but this didn't mean I had a good idea on how to handle this. I didn't know what I could do in order to resolve this matter as the head of the household, as a dad. I have no experience, after all. In other words, I lack data.

I eventually arrived at the classroom while I was thinking to myself like that.

“Hey, Jjarō. Let's talk for a bit.”

And sure enough, Nanda had been waiting for me. Saeyeon must have gone somewhere because I couldn't see her in the classroom.

Unusually, none of my classmates were particularly paying attention to me. Normally, the fact that Saeyeon and I had come to school separately would have been enough to make them start teasing me and ask if we got into another fight. I felt strangely anxious because the atmosphere felt similar to last

time.

“Stop looking around like that. There’s something I want to talk about with you, so can we go to the clubroom for a bit?”

“Huh? Okay…….”

I was led towards the clubroom as Nanda wrapped his arm around my shoulder and started to drag me along. As I expected, Nanda locked the clubroom door behind him. I took my glasses off.

“Huh? Why are you taking your glasses off?”

“I just thought, like last time…….”

Nanda chuckled at my response.

“If someone else heard you say that, then they’d probably think that all I do is hit you. Put your glasses back on.”

It seems he really was only planning talk to me. I sat down at the table.

“So, what did you mean by what you said last weekend? From what I saw, the little lady got seriously pissed because of what you said. Saeyeon seemed upset as well.”

Comfortably, he was speaking in a relaxed tone, but the glint in his eyes was serious, so I smacked my lips and contemplated about how I should answer him.

“……For starters, it’s not what you think.”

And, after a lot of thought, I thought that it would be all right to get some advice from this guy.

“Except, how should I say it, it’s just…….”

“You weren’t trying to say that Jihye and Saeyeon are alike?”

“……Was it that obvious?”

I felt my energy being sapped away due to the fact that Nanda had said that as if it were obvious. I wasn’t the only one who thought that? Upperclassman Nabom and Jaim seemed to realize it as well, but now Nanda knows as well? Nanda chuckled.

“Well, if it’s about Saeyeon, then I have a rough grasp of things.”

Though I think this is about Jihye and not Saeyeon.

Nanda let out a small sigh and spoke.

“In any case, your future self isn’t normal either. Creating a robot that’s completely based on his wife. Should I say that he loves her that much, or should I call him a pervert……?”

“T-That’s not it! Both of those are wrong! ……Probably.”

Nanda must not have noticed that my voice started to go down during the last part of my sentence as he continued.

“Still, you’re in a bad situation. Jaim most likely misunderstood. I understand your intent, Jjaro, but the way you phrased it was bad. What you said makes it sound like you’re completely ignoring everything Jaim had done until now.”

“……I know. But it was just a jest.”

“Fights normally start because of things that are said thoughtlessly.”

His argument was so sound that I couldn’t say anything back.

“Did you try to explain yourself to Jaim?”

“It didn’t work out well. Jaim didn’t even listen to what I had to say because she was so upset.”

“Of course not. She came here because you and Saeyeon fought in the future, so hearing something like that would definitely anger her.”

“……Probably.”

I let out a deep sigh. I know what the problem is, but I don’t know how to solve it. At the very least, this may not be something that I can solve.

If that’s the case, if this is an issue that I can’t solve, then…….

“Hey, Shin Nanda.”

“No.”

“……I didn’t even finish my sentence, you know?”

Nanda responded to me while smiling brightly.

“You were about to ask me to explain things to her for you, weren’t you? No.”

“You know that I normally don’t ask others for help. I’m asking you as a friend. Talk with Jaim for me.”

Nanda shook his head with a smile still on his face.

“Being friends doesn’t mean that I always have to help you, right?”

This guy, who knew he could say something so cruel with a smile on his face. This was a bit shocking. Don’t tell me, is he plotting something like I am?

“Because I’m your friend, I can’t help you if you ask as a friend.”

Nanda said that towards my doubtful gaze.

“If you were an acquaintance, Jjaro, then I would help you, but that’s because it wouldn’t matter to me what happens to you. However, since you’re my friend, what happens to you matters to me a lot.”

“.....What is that supposed to mean?”

“Literally just that. It means that family issues aren’t within my range of things I can help you with.”

Nanda sat down on a chair and leaned back comfortably before continuing.

“I like the little lady, I like Upperclassman Nabom, I like you, Jjaro, and I love Saeyeon. That’s why you have to solve this with your own strength, Jjaro. Because I believe that would be best for both you and everyone else.”

“.....”

I didn’t say anything about the incredibly concerning line he had just said since this was something which we mutually understood. Nanda grinned and stood up.

“In any case, since you’re the dad, the head of the household, do your best. Saeyeon probably didn’t go back to her parents’ place because she dislikes you.”

“Wait, how do you know about that?”

“Saeyeon explained everything in the classroom earlier. She even asked the other kids to not get involved so that you can handle this yourself.”

“.....”

That girl.

Nanda must have read my expression as he then added,

“Saeyeon is most likely trying to help you since she has hope in you as well. You wouldn’t like it if the other kids tried to meddle in your family matters at a time like this, would you? Since she believes in you, she’s probably waiting for you to take care of this with your own strength. You’re the one who said that you would, after all.”

‘Well, she probably is mad at you, though.’, Nanda said that with a laugh. A bit mischievously.

“Above all else, Jjarō is a prince on a white horse to Saeyeon, after all.”

“.....I said it’s not like that.”

I turned away slightly and muttered.

“Don’t make her wait for too long. Although there are a lot of people who like Saeyeon, the only person Saeyeon likes is you alone, Jjarō.”

Nanda opened the door to the clubroom and left with a grin.

“Good luck, friend.”

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“So that’s why you came to me?”

After school. Upperclassman Nabom let out a sigh and shook her head.

“You really don’t listen to others, Underclassman Jin Jaro. If you consider the past, then asking for help from those around you when you’re in trouble is a good development, however, do I look like a pushover who would help you every time you ask for help?”

“No, that’s not the case, but…….”

“More importantly, why did you come to me for help? Do you think I’m some sort of family counselor? Answer me this.”

“It’s……. Uhm……. If it’s Upperclassman Nabom, then I thought, that you might know an answer…….”

My kneeling legs were starting to go numb. The feeling at the end of my toes was gradually disappearing, so I wiggled them. Upperclassman Nabom then glared at me, so I stopped.

Haa, Upperclassman Nabom let out another deep sigh and spoke.

“In this situation, the only thing I can do is send a report that there’s a problem and take both Miss Jaim and Miss Jihye back to the future. If that’s what you want, then I could, but…….”

“I’d prefer another option if possible.”

“Then there’s none.”

Upperclassman Nabom declared firmly.

“I consider the sole fact that I’m turning a blind eye towards Miss Jaim’s information contamination as the largest assistance that I could possibly give.”

“.....Information contamination?”

I didn't know what she meant, so I asked back. It didn't seem like she was referring to the previous incident either. Upperclassman Nabom knit her brows and spoke.

“Have you not realized? I'm certain that I told you to be a bit more concerned about Miss Jaim.”

“No, this is different from being a bit concerned.....”

I wasn't able to finish my sentence. Upperclassman Nabom had narrowed her eyes at me.

“She's experienced her mother leaving and a robot that resembled her mother being brought to her as her mother's replacement, but when she came to the past to find her father who had said 'I've never seen your mother as a woman.', he said something along the lines of 'If she were like that robot, then we wouldn't have broken up.'.”

“.....”

“If you have a brain, then try thinking for yourself, Underclassman Jin Jaro.”

Is that, how it turns out?

Did I replace her mother, who I couldn't see as a woman, with a better robot?

I smacked my lips and Upperclassman Nabom spoke as if she were fed up with me.

“You may be undeserving of this, but, Underclassman Jin Jaro, the good news is, this situation isn't as severe as last time. At most, this is at the level of a kid being rebellious after hitting puberty, so there's no need for me to step forward immediately. I'm not sure if this would be good news to you, though.”

“.....That's more than enough.”

“If you truly think that way, then I sincerely have nothing more to say.”

Upperclassman Nabom shook her head as if she found me to be pitiable before speaking.

“On a side note, it must be quite troubling for Miss Jihye as well. She ended

up hearing something like that despite having attentively taken care of Miss Jaim. Even though she probably didn't want this either."

How much does this person know, exactly? While I listened to her talk to herself in a tone obviously meant for me to hear, that thought went through my head.

Upperclassman Nabom turned back towards me and spoke.

"But are you not going to go home? I don't think this is the time for you to be here like this."

".....I don't want to go home."

"Words from the head of a household who had been shunned by his family."

"Please don't say that while laughing. You'll hurt my feelings."

"Still, isn't the very fact that you have a family to go back to much better than before?"

"....."

Seriously, how much does this person know?

I let out a sigh and opened my mouth hesitantly.

"Honestly, if someone were to run away from home, I thought that it would be Jaim."

"She did run away from home in the future as well."

"I never thought that Saeyeon would get that upset at that moment and declare that she's going home."

"You're the one who refused her offer to help, after all, Underclassman Jin Jaro. If you were in Underclassman Ja Saeyeon's position, wouldn't her anger be natural?"

"But I don't want to tell Saeyeon."

"Even though you told her that you hated her and all sorts of other hurtful things last time?"

"....."

Why is this person only stabbing at the painful parts today?

I sighed and stood up.

“Underclassman Jin Jaro?”

“What?”

I grumbled in response once Upperclassman Nabom called out to me. She smiled gently and spoke.

“It’s unlikely that Miss Jin Jaim doesn’t actually want to talk you. She even came here earlier. Regardless of whether Underclassman Jin Jaro becomes that sort of person in the future, whether Miss Jaim hates you or not, she most likely came here in order to at least reconcile with that father of hers.”

Upperclassman Nabom chuckled and then added,

“Let’s consider this piece of advice as a special service.”

“.....Thank you very much.”

I could only answer like that.

After Upperclassman Nabom saw me off, I went home. I let out a sigh as I rode on the elevator by myself. I could only smile bitterly due to the expression I saw on my face in the mirror. What a pathetic sight.

Saeyeon was probably home already. If I knocked on her door right now, then I might be able to talk to her.

I stopped in front of Saeyeon’s place. I thought for a moment. She did tell me to find her after I’ve resolved this issue, but, as I thought, would telling Saeyeon the truth and asking for her help be the actual right answer?

But, how will Saeyeon react when she finds out that we break up in the future? This worried me.

I was simply frozen in place with my arm extended and my knuckles hovering next to the door.

In that instant, the door opened. Saeyeon’s mom smiled.

“You’re here, Jaro?”

“.....Yeah. I’m here.”

I peered over her shoulder and into the house. I thought that I might be able to see Saeyeon. However, Saeyeon’s mom blocked my line of sight with her body.

“Not now.”

Saeyeon’s mom shook her head and pushed me back slightly. She came out to the hallway with me and spoke after closing the door behind her.

“Saeyeon said that she didn’t want to talk to you right now, so she asked this old lady to talk to you instead.”

Also, Saeyeon’s mom added and smiled brightly.

“There’s something I want to talk to you about which I don’t want Saeyeon to hear.”

That smile was seriously scary.

“For starters, Jaro, I heard that you told Saeyeon you didn’t need her help even though you told her before that you needed her. What happened?”

“That’s because.....”

I heard laughter the instant I lowered my head in order to carefully select my words, so I looked back up.

“Sorry about that. I couldn’t calm down if I didn’t tease you a little.”

A sad smile appeared on Saeyeon’s mom’s face as she shook her head.

“.....For now, this may be sudden, but excuse me.”

Saeyeon’s mom let out a small sigh and took out a cigarette packet from one of her inside pockets. She then put a cigarette in her mouth and lit it. It seems she really intended to have a more serious talk than usual.

“.....You should quit that.”

The faint scent of tobacco which Saeyeon’s mom only smoked at her workplace or occasionally in front of me when she had something important to discuss tickled my nose. She’d only do this in times like this in order to not get caught by Saeyeon.

“I heard about everything from Jihye without Saeyeon knowing.”

Hoo, Saeyeon’s mom blew out some smoke and spoke.

“I was curious as to what Jaim’s identity was, but I never expected for it to be something like this, you know? Honestly, it’s still hard to believe. My granddaughter and a robot from the future. This is way different from what I originally thought.”

“.....What did you think they were?”

“Who knows? A homeless child you were looking after or a child who had run away from home? Something like that.”

Saeyeon’s mom took a drag and then exhaled the smoke.

“That’s because the story you guys made up didn’t make sense. Be it the excuse that she was your and Saeyeon’s daughter, or that one of those people had that child after two-timing. Those people aren’t the type of people to do something like that.”

“.....That’s right.”

They’re people who live for the sake of their work, after all. If they had the leisure to cheat or commit adultery, then they would use that time to focus on their work more.

Saeyeon’s mom chuckled lightly at my response.

“Don’t scold Jihye too much. I found out after persistently coaxing her despite her refusal to speak until the very end. She was even going to go as far as to stop recharging so that she wouldn’t say anything. She was really worried that you might scold her a lot, Jaro.”

“.....So you heard, about the future.”

When she said she might be scolded by me, she was probably referring to that side.

Saeyeon’s mom nodded her head.

“Yup. I even heard about how you and Saeyeon break up. Saeyeon doesn’t know, does she?”

“Yeah. I don’t really want her to know.”

“You did well. Who knows how Saeyeon would react.”

Smoke spread throughout the air.

“I’ve said this several times already, but I really am grateful to you, Jaro.”

Saeyeon’s mom spoke while tapping the ash from her cigarette.

“It’s thanks to you that Saeyeon calls me ‘mom’.”

Saeyeon’s birth mother was Saeyeon’s **mother**.

Saeyeon’s new mother was Saeyeon’s **mom**.

If anything, the names Saeyeon addressed them by should have been reversed, but they were names that I had instructed her to refer to them by in order to comfort Saeyeon and make her understand.

Names which meant that she should cherish her current family more than a family that was gone.

“I was surprised when she called me ‘mom’ the first time we met, but when I heard that you had purposely taught her to say that, it made me grateful. That’s why I left Saeyeon in your care. Because it was difficult.”

Even though she doesn’t know what that had caused.

While letting out a sigh filled with smoke, Saeyeon’s mom continued.

“No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t be Saeyeon’s birth mother.”

I recall once hearing the reason why Saeyeon’s mom didn’t have a child of her own. She said that it was because she wasn’t confident that she would be able to love them equally if Saeyeon were to have a little sibling. The daughter she came to have one day and the child who she had personally given birth to. Since it wouldn’t be a simple sister and younger sibling relationship.

“Because I feel like I wouldn’t be able to love Saeyeon properly if I had a child of my own. I’m a bad person, aren’t I?”

I felt like her ability to say these words while smiling bitterly was the best representation of her personality.

Because she was Saeyeon's mom, because she was a person who cared about Saeyeon.

This was why I was so envious.

"That's why I'm very worried right now."

Saeyeon's mom put her cigarette out by stepping on it and continued.

"Saeyeon is talking about Jihye becoming a second mother, and this is definitely an incredibly painful topic for her."

".....Probably."

I barely managed to nod my head.

Saeyeon cherishes her family. Her mother is a part of her family, her mom is a part of her family, and I'm also a part of her family. She was somehow able to maintain herself like that. However, that wouldn't solve everything.

Even if she acts as if everything's all right, I know that she's lonely underneath that smile of hers. If she knew that we were going to break up in the future, if she knew that Jihye was the one who took her spot afterward, if she knew that she would be forgotten like her mother was, what would she think?

Furthermore, if she knew that she was replaced by a robot who was made to resemble her?

".....She probably wouldn't like it."

Once I muttered those words along with a sigh, Saeyeon's mom nodded. She nodded her head weakly.

"Yeah. She probably wouldn't."

"That's why.....!"

My mouth closed in the middle of my sentence. I lowered my head.

That's why, what? What am I going to say?

What could I possibly say to Saeyeon's new mom?

Pat, Saeyeon's mom rested her hand on top of my head.

"Right now, Saeyeon's family is you, Jaro. And also Jaim."

Saeyeon's mom smiled gently while patting my head.

"That's....."

"I'm saying that rather than this old lady saying something, you're more capable of supporting Saeyeon."

Her hand stroked my head smoothly and warmly.

"Wasn't it you who made her think of this old lady as her mom and listen to me even though I'm her second mom? You were also the one who cherished and loved Saeyeon until now."

".....I didn't."

There were a lot of things I wanted to say. Rather, there was a lot I had to apologize for.

However, if I say something, then I would definitely be wronging this person even more.

"I....."

"You'll continue to cherish Saeyeon from now on, right?"

Saeyeon's mom simply continued to speak with a smile on her face as if to stop me from speaking.

There was a lot of stuff I wanted to say, but I decided to just receive her warm hand in silence and agree.

"Do your best. Even if you're a family, there will be times where you argue. But since you're a family, it's best not to let too much time pass by and simply forget about it. Your relationship will become strained if you do that. You're a family, so the best thing you can do is to put that much more effort into reconciling and working things out properly."

"Okay....."

"Then head on home first. This old lady is going to have to wait for the smell to fade a bit before heading back inside."

I could no longer say anything to Saeyeon's mom as she looked out the window in the hallway, so I simply lowered my head slightly.

As a means to both show my gratitude and also to apologize.

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Once I went inside, I discovered that Multi was gone.

For a moment, an image appeared in my head, to be exact, it was the image of a heavy metal singer smashing a guitar live on stage, but it seems Jaim wasn't the one who did it. Multi was the only thing that had disappeared. Everything else was left alone. As if someone had picked it up and left.

“.....”

It wasn't Saeyeon. If it were, then her mom wouldn't have blocked my line of sight earlier, but more importantly, Saeyeon wouldn't do something like this.

If that's the case, then it was definitely.....

I let out a small sigh and started to make my way towards a certain place.

And should I say that it was as I expected? I expected this, but a rather surreal sight was spread out before me.

“.....”

I arrived at a neighborhood park which I've recently been visiting as often as I used to when I was little. In this park, with its elephant-shaped slide as its main feature, Jihye was riding on the swing by herself. It was currently the time of day where the park was normally quiet.

She was holding Multi in her arms.

With the setting sun in the background, an orthodox maid was in a playground and sitting on a swing while holding onto a robot vacuum cleaner which had a mannequin head and legs awkwardly attached to it. No matter how I looked at this, this scene was surreal.

Creak, creak, an annoying sound resonated from the swing which obviously

hadn't been oiled in a very long time. Each time the sound echoed, her black hair and skirt shook in the wind. Every time the tip of her shoes moved forward and back, they drew a line in the sand.

Truly, even that expression was like Saeyeon's.

I could hear some muttering in the distance.

A couple of old ladies who lived in the neighborhood were spectating the bizarre sight before them. If you consider Jihye's personality, then anyone could come and talk to her, but it seems the surreal sight before them and Jihye's obviously crestfallen state prevented them from doing so.

I let out a sigh and resolved myself to approach her.

"Why are you acting so miserable in a place like this?"

"Ah, Master."

Jihye turned her head furtively in response to my voice. However, both her expression and her continued swinging didn't stop. I turned around and looked at the old ladies and, thankfully, they seemed to understand my gaze as they left. I let out a small sigh and sat on the swing next to her.

Jihye spoke while turning her feet.

"If I throw Miss Multi and break her right now, would I disappear as well?"

"That's....."

"I know. Nothing will probably happen."

A difficult to read smile appeared on Jihye's face as she continued.

"I'm sorry. I just suddenly had the urge to do that."

"....."

I didn't say anything. For a brief moment, only the sound of creaking could be heard.

"Master."

I turned to look at Jihye.

"Why did Master create robot maids?"

A forlorn expression. It contained a desperation that sincerely felt as if she wanted to know my answer.

“Please answer me as the creator. Why was I made?”

That’s why I decided to throw away my hesitation and answer her.

“.....Because I needed a family. A substitute family.”

“A substitute.....?”

“I hated having a family, but I wanted one that much as well.”

I decided to confess about the immature fantasy I dreamt of when I was a child but had never told anyone. I never told Jaim either.

I hated having a family. I believed they were a needless existence that could be thrown away.

However, my loneliness was unavoidable. But I didn’t want to tell anyone this.

So it was simple. I just had to make one. A perfect family.

A family that wouldn’t throw me away no matter what happens.

A family that would be on my side no matter what happens.

I don’t need a family. A substitute made by myself was enough.

Robots that looked human and thought like them as well, but also never changed and promised both love and loyalty. They would be more than enough.

“In the end, I can only think like that because I’m a twisted human being.”

Because I’m perfect. Because I’m a genius. Because I can accomplish everything by myself. That’s why I can overcome loneliness by myself as well. I can create a family. That’s what I thought.

I smiled bitterly and spoke.

“You probably think of yourself as a part of Jaim’s family because I made you like that. No, that’s what I probably intended when I left Jaim in your care.”

Furthermore, that’s probably why Jaim didn’t like her.

Because Jaim didn’t want a substitute.

And also, that's probably why I made her resemble Saeyeon.

Because, ironically, Saeyeon was the only family that I could think of even though I had envied and hated her so much.

And if I made her resemble Saeyeon.....

"Then, if the reason for my birth is to be a replacement for a family....."

Jihye, who had been listening to me, then asked.

"Since she now has a family, am I no longer needed?"

"....."

I didn't answer.

"I..... I may have been like that because Master had made me like that, but."

Jihye opened her mouth carefully. I decided to listen to her in silence.

"I wanted to be Master and the Miss' family."

With a disappointed look, but with a slightly hopeful voice.

"I might be a defective product and it's weird for a robot to act like this, but."

Even though she was embarrassed, she spoke with certainty.

Jihye spoke with a faint smile on her face as if she were dreaming.

"I wanted the three of us, to be smiling, happily."

.....She probably did.

If I made her resemble Saeyeon, then I wouldn't forget about this part.

And if I wanted to create a perfect family, then I would have even considered this part. How ruthless is my future self?

Jihye continued even though I was smiling bitterly.

"So when I heard that the Miss had gone to the past, I may have been slightly hopeful. Master in the future only saw me as a simple invention, after all."

".....Probably."

"But what can't be done can't be done, can it?"

Jihye scratched her cheek and chuckled. She turned her head to face me.

“No matter what I do, will I always be lacking?”

Hesitantly, with a gaze that looked as if she were betting her final hope.

“If Master wants, then I’ll work hard to become more perfect.”

Earnestly, with a gaze that looked as if she were pleading to me to not throw her away.

“I’ll do my best so that the Miss likes me as well.”

Jihye spoke while gazing at me.

“So…….”

“If it were a few months ago, then you may have been able to accomplish that.”

Jihye’s mouth stopped once I spoke.

Perhaps, if it were still the time when I didn’t have a family, then I would have liked this idea.

If the invention that I’ve constantly been dreaming to create appeared before me in its perfect state, then I would have chosen that path without any second thought.

An ideal person who I wouldn’t have to feel inferior to, be concerned about, fight with, take care of, change when necessary, and would always think about and worship me.

I pictured it for a moment.

If it were my past self, then what sort of response would I have shown? How would I have turned out?

“But, not now. Not anymore.”

Even if it wasn’t perfect, I was already able to obtain the thing that I wanted.

“While spending time with Saeyeon and Jaim, I realized how sweet and empowering having a family is.”

The part that I couldn’t fill on my own.

The part that wouldn't be filled no matter how hard I worked or created things.

"How it feels to have people who need me."

Despite being the worst person in the world, the very fact that someone appreciated me was so incredible that I wanted to do something for them however I could, regardless of whether we get into a fight or they choose to ignore me.

Even if there's a chance I may one day be hurt like I was before.

Still.

"Sorry, but it's a bit too late."

Therefore, this was all I could tell her.

Though I may hurt her feelings, this was a part that I couldn't do anything about.

".....I knew you would say that."

Jihye simply laughed.

"Then, as I thought, I'm really unnecessary, aren't I?"

"No, you're wrong."

Jihye blinked.

".....How, should I say it?"

I spoke as I swung my legs and moved the swing.

"You're definitely what I thought the perfect Saeyeon would be."

There's a chance that I was trying to atone. Albeit, this was closer to being self-contentment.

It was undoubtedly my fault that Saeyeon left.

"But, that's actually impossible. You're not Saeyeon, after all."

If anything, Jihye was closer to being.....

"You're, more like my mirror."

“Master’s mirror?”

“.....You’re the ‘Saeyeon that I imagined’.”

In the end, it meant that she was my greed.

My idea of Saeyeon. My idea of a substitute family.

Either way, it clearly shows how immature I was since I could clearly see her in front of me right now.

Even though Saeyeon is just Saeyeon.

No matter what I try to add or remove from her, in the end, only my greed and desires would be added.

A Saeyeon who would accept me no matter what I say.

A Saeyeon who’s good at housework.

A Saeyeon who gets embarrassed if you tell her to strip.

I simply created a doll that resembled my ideal Saeyeon. Rather, it resembled my twisted self more.

“That’s probably why my future self only saw you as an invention.”

Even if I’m a terrible person in the future, there’s no way that I wouldn’t notice.

As she began to resemble Saeyeon more and more, their differences would also become more and more apparent as I continued to work on her. The fact that she wasn’t Saeyeon. What I had done would become crystal clear.

“So, on the contrary, I need you.”

In order to prevent that from happening. In order to not make that mistake.

In order to prevent myself from believing that I can do everything by myself.

In order to prevent myself from creating a perfect Saeyeon, a perfect family, and then realizing that that was a mistake and I was simply being greedy, which then results in me throwing everything I have away and distancing myself from them.

This is a cruel thing to say to Jihye.

You're a flawed creation. A mistake I had made with my greed.

That's why, on the contrary, I need you so that I can reflect on my actions.

This clearly isn't something that Jihye wants.

If anything, it might have hurt her less if I simply told her that I didn't need her.

However, even so.

Although I can't do a lot for her, since I'm the one who caused her problem, at the very least, I don't want her to think that she's unnecessary.

I don't want to say something similar to when I hurt Jaim.

If possible, I don't ever want to tell anyone that they aren't needed again.

".....Also, wouldn't at least one employee be necessary for the home of such a well-off person like myself?"

So, in response to the joke I barely managed to say, Jihye giggled weakly.

"You're both kind and cruel, Master."

".....I was born like this."

I could only avert my gaze and say that.

"It's just like the Missus said."

Jihye stood up from the swing and stuck her arm out with Multi held in her other arm.

"Now then, Master, let us return home."

In response to her sad smile that was both similar and different from Saeyeon's,

I reached my hand out and grabbed hers.

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“Jaim.”

I carefully knocked on her door. Of course, there was no response. I let out a small sigh and called out once more.

“You’re inside, aren’t you?”

There was the option of using the spare key to enter the room, but I didn’t want to. I heard the sound of footsteps and the door opened.

“Wait a second, Jjaro. I’m having a talk with Jaim right now.”

It was Saeyeon.

“You……?”

“Give us a moment.”

Before I could even say something, the door shut with a bang in front of me. Click, the door was locked again.

Why was Saeyeon here? When did she get here?

However, before quibbling about this, I decided to place my ear against the door. I could faintly hear their voices inside.

“……Honestly, I don’t know why you’re upset, Jaim. Jjaro won’t tell me and you won’t tell me either.”

“……Because it doesn’t involve you, Mom.”

“That makes me a bit sad if you say that as well.”

I couldn’t see her, but Saeyeon was probably smiling bitterly right now.

“You also don’t want something like me anyway, Mom.”

And, a sad look must have appeared on her face because of that comment.

“Why do you think that, Jaim?”

“Because you don’t!”

Jaim let out a loud voice. I could hear sobbing.

“You left the house without saying even a single word to me……! That means you have nothing to say to me, doesn’t it? You think I’m troublesome, don’t you? You weren’t the one who gave birth to me, after all! I’m just an annoying daughter who appeared all of a sudden!”

“…….”

“On that day as well, when you found out that I came from the future, you were more happy by the fact that you married Dad. Dad’s more important to you than something like me, isn’t he?! You don’t care about what happens to me!”

……Is that what she thinks?

“You and Dad don’t care about me. That’s probably why you left as well! Since you don’t need something like me! Dad’s like that as well, so that’s why he took in that piece of scrap metal! Since he doesn’t care about me at all!”

You’re wrong, I wanted to open the door and yell that, but I couldn’t say anything. My hands simply hurt as my nails dug into my palms because my fists were clenched tightly.

“……I didn’t know you felt that way, Jaim.”

Saeyeon spoke with a sad voice.

“But……. You’re wrong.”

“What do you mean I’m wrong? In the end, you chose to take that piece of scrap metal and left home as well! You didn’t choose me! You threw me away to Dad……!”

I held my breath due to those words. She was most likely not only referring to what happened yesterday, but what happened in the future as well.

Saeyeon who left after leaving her with me, the person who didn’t love her.

Why didn't Saeyeon take her with her? That was most likely a question Jaim had been thinking about.

She probably understands why Saeyeon got sick of me. She heard me tell Saeyeon that I never saw her as a girl, after all. Even though I'm the one who made Saeyeon like that.

However, if that's the case, then why?

Why did Saeyeon throw her away when Saeyeon ran away from me?

I could only hear Jaim's sobbing voice.

"I didn't throw you away, Jaim."

I heard Saeyeon's voice.

".....It's just, there was something I wanted to talk about with Miss Jihye and I thought that there was something you and Jjaro had to talk about as well."

"I have, sniff, nothing to talk about, with Dad."

"There's the thing you're hiding from me, isn't there?"

"....."

Jaim's sniffing stopped in response to those words. My breathing as well.

"I don't know what you and Jjaro are hiding from me."

"We're not, hiding..... anything."

"I won't pry if you're going to be like that because I believe you two are keeping it a secret since it's something you don't want me to know, but still, that makes me a bit sad."

Saeyeon spoke as if it were regrettable, but she then did her best to continue in a bright tone.

"It's a family matter, so I want all of us to work together. If we do, then I feel like I could understand and also accept it as well, but..... It's a bit regrettable. However, I think a bit differently now."

".....How's that?"

"Just because your family is hiding something from you and think a bit

differently than you, that doesn't mean they're doing so because they don't like you or want to bully you."

Saeyeon spoke warmly as if she were embracing Jaim with her voice.

"A long time ago, I thought that Jjarlo loved me unconditionally. So when Jjarlo said that he hated me, I was really sad. Despite that, if I think about it, even if Jjarlo said that he hated me, he stayed with me since we were young, right?"

"....."

"Also, I didn't know that Jjarlo was harboring these feelings. Because that made me sad, I got sort of mad yesterday. I thought he was trying to hide everything from me again like before."

'But, Jaim.' Saeyeon continued.

"When my mom first came, I was really sad. Even though I only have one mom, how could I have a new one? That's why, at first, I decided that even if my new mom came, I'd never call her mom."

"....."

Jaim was confused by the sudden change of topic, but Saeyeon continued to speak.

"At that time, Jjarlo told me this. Jjarlo told me that my mom was going to change, but the fact that Mom loved me wasn't ever going to change. If I hate my new mom, then Mom would be sad. Mom wants me to be happy, after all."

That's why she sort of understands.

"I believe that the reason you dislike Miss Jihye is for a similar reason. I'm not certain, but despite Miss Jihye's efforts to take care of you like a mom would, you hated that, didn't you?"

"....."

"If you did, then that'd make me sad."

"....."

"I'd like it if you thought of Miss Jihye as your family as well. I'd like it even more if you thought of her as your second mom who'll love you when I'm not

around. I don't want our family to fight amongst one another, after all."

Ehehe, I heard laughter and then the sound of Jaim being pulled into a hug.

"I'll be your family no matter what happens and how much times passes, Jaim. Even if I disappear, this won't change."

".....Mom....."

"Now then, since it seems like Jjaro has something he wants to talk to you about after this, I'll leave you two to talk."

I was able to back away from the door before it opened. Saeyeon pouted as she looked at me.

"I didn't intend to help you at first. I wanted to leave you alone to do what you want, but how long are you going to keep me waiting?"

"You..... how far do you.....?"

"All the way to the fact that Miss Jihye likes you?"

I'm not sure how she interpreted my question, but Saeyeon answered teasingly.

"But..... You probably heard me as well, but I'm not going to think about things like that. Of course, I might get a bit jealous——but since I believe that I'm the one you like the most."

Saeyeon smiled slightly.

"Hurry up and bring me back, okay?"

".....You."

Without turning around, Saeyeon opened the front door and left. Another silence fell upon the house. Jaim's door was closed once more.

Seriously, this girl..... I simply shook my head.

I really can't win against Saeyeon.

I knocked on the door.

"Jin Jaim."

"....."

“Are you going to keep staying quiet like that? Did you come all the way here in order to live here and never talk to me? That’s not it, right?”

“……I didn’t expect you to say something like that, Dad.”

The voice I barely managed to hear was cold.

“You’re the one who said that there was no reason for me to come, didn’t you?”

“That’s not what I meant.”

“I’m not curious as to what you meant, what’s important is the fact that you said it.”

“……You’re probably right about that.”

I could only hear Jaim’s cold refusal beyond the door.

“In the end, I’m saying that you’re the same person now and then as well. You only care about yourself. You don’t care about what happens to others.”

“……You may also be right about that as well.”

“See?”

“But…… I want to change a little.”

There’s nothing that doesn’t change. That’s fine. That’s an obvious fact.

The issue is how you feel about that change.

“In truth, I hesitated because of that.”

Since it was the way I lived until now.

“……At first, I definitely thought you were troublesome.”

I hated the idea of having a family, I thought I could do everything by myself and I lived like that until now. However, on that day Saeyeon and I slept together while holding hands, that triggered a change.

A family was forced upon me even though I didn’t want one.

Something I had to take responsibility for and protect appeared.

What I wanted was the strength to go towards my dream by myself and solve

everything by myself. The only thing I had to protect was my own ego.

The fact that the dark part within me, which I had made for that purpose, was gradually opening and releasing that darkness made me somewhat anxious.

It felt like the thing that had been protecting me was leaving me, after all.

“I don’t know what I should do as your dad, no, as a family. I’ve never experienced having one.”

Regardless, something I had to protect appeared instead.

“I wanted to do this family experiment in order to figure out what a family is, just as we both wanted.”

To know what’s better. How to take in the change.

“So, I wanted to also pay Saeyeon back for how much I hurt her, although that’s probably impossible.”

And then, it appeared before me. Along with it came the clear evidence of what would happen if I continued on my path without changing at all.

“I could only laugh at myself. I realized how terrible of a life I was going to live.”

I realized that, even though we broke up, I created a robot that resembled Saeyeon and continued to regret that moment. Despite this, I didn’t give up.

“I also realized what I had done to Saeyeon until now.”

I found out that even though I had twisted and broken Saeyeon as I pleased, I was also regretting that.

“That’s why I want to change from now on.”

I probably can’t change completely but at the very least,

“I want to become a person who doesn’t hurt the people precious to him.”

I want to protect everything essential to me.

“That’s not what I meant by what I said yesterday. It’s just……. I thought that if I were a bit more of a proper person, then I feel like we could have become a good family which didn’t require you to have something like a ‘Happy Family

Planning’.”

It was already too late, and although I couldn’t revert something that had already happened, “That’s why I need you, Jaim, in order to change even a little bit from now on. Since you’re my daughter. Since you’re the person who made me change. Since you’re my family.”

I couldn’t hear anything behind the door.

“Also, if you don’t come out, then Saeyeon and I will keep fighting like this.”

While managing to laugh, I ended up saying that.

Since, in the end, I’m a twisted person, even if I have to resort to this,

“I want to hurry up and bring Saeyeon back.”

“……Saying something like that now doesn’t make me happy, you know?”

I heard grumbling beyond the door.

“Of course not, but……. Can you somehow forgive me?”

Jaim opened the door and looked at me with a sour expression on her face.

“Then go ask Mom on a date right now.”

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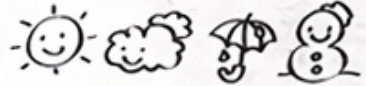
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20XX-June-6th

Please circle
today's weather.



I'm going on a date with Jjaro this weekend >_<

I've gone to places with Jjaro a lot, but this is the first time we've gone on a date,

so I'm nervous!

Really, Jjaro always makes me wait. I got a bit grumpy, so I also made Jjaro wait, but this wasn't enough to satisfy me.

Still, I'm happy that Jjaro came to pick me up.

I'm already thinking about what I should wear for the date. What kind of clothes does Jjaro like?

Cute clothes? Sexy clothes? I'm not really confident in the last one...

Hmm...

What I told Jaim, might have slightly been a lie.

Of course, I like Mom, but the fact that I want to see Mom also won't change.

I know that Mom loves me, but I sometimes want to see Mom.

Still, Mom is Mom. Like how Mom is Mom.

Like how my love for Jjaro won't change.

So I want to be together with Jjaro and Jaim for a long, long time.

TL note: Thanks for reading the chapter. This is basically the big moment of the volume, but it obviously wasn't as serious as volume 1. The last volume covered Jaro's issues and this volume covered Jaim's. There was a lot more character development in this volume since the previous volume mostly focused on only Jaro, but this branched out to Saeyeon, Jaim, and the new character, Jihye. I mentioned it before, but volume 3 personally felt really intense for me, so I'm looking forward to translating it.

The remaining chapters are a lot shorter, however, I'm starting university again next week, so I'm uncertain as to how my translating speed will change. I have plenty of empty periods between classes, so I will definitely utilize those, but I don't have a laptop yet, so we'll have to see how it goes.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 8

8. Start

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“The weather is starting to get hot…….”

Should I say that I could feel that summer is drawing near? Or should I say that I’m worried about how hot this summer is going to be since it’s already this hot in June?

“Jjaro, did you wait long?”

Once I heard a voice call out to me, I turned off my handheld mini-fan and spoke.

“Rather, is there a need for us to come out separately like this? We live in the same house anyway, so we could have come out together.”

“But I wanted to say that.”

“You made me wait outside in this scorching heat for 30 minutes just to say that line? You sure have grown a lot lately, Ja Saeyeon.”

Saeyeon just laughed with an ‘ehehe’ in response to my words which I had said while gnashing my teeth.

Today was the day we promised to go on a date on. It's a bit embarrassing to say it like this.

"Ah, the bus is here."

"Did you put sunscreen on properly?"

"I even put on this hat."

Saeyeon bobbed her wide-brimmed, white hat as if she were showing it off. She has a weak body, so if she receives direct sunlight for too long, then she could get anemia.

"More importantly, is a place like that really all right? Wouldn't somewhere indoors be better?"

"I wanted to go to a zoo. The weather is nice, so wouldn't it be better to go outside?"

"I prefer the indoors, though."

I grumbled and sat down on an empty seat on the bus. Saeyeon sat down right next to me. The bus started to move with a jerk.

"So, what exactly did you want to see at a zoo that made you want to go to one this much?"

"Animals!"

".....Ah, okay."

I mean, you do go to zoos in order to see animals, but..... I really don't understand her. While I let out a small sigh, Saeyeon simply continued to beam happily.

As we had trivial conversations which didn't differ from our normal conversations, the bus stopped at every bus stop before eventually arriving at an old zoo on the outskirts of the city.

"It's an elephant train, an elephant train!"

"No, that isn't an animal."

It seems that there weren't a lot of people who wanted to come to a zoo during this scorching heat, so the roads were rather empty. Saeyeon simply

grinned as if she were having fun and I followed behind her from a short distance away.

“Look, it’s a bear, Jjarro!”

“.....Yeah. A bear.”

“How cute......”

Saeyeon leaned against the safety rails and hopped up and down as she watched the bears move around in the water. I’ve thought about this before as well, but I can’t tell what’s so cute about bears. Those are wild beasts, you know? Wild beasts. You’ll die if they hit you with a right hook.

“Three little bears~.”

“Do you not get tired of that song?”

It’s fortunate that no one around us is paying attention to us. However, the instant that thought went through my head, I heard someone chuckle at Saeyeon’s singing as they passed by us. What, do you have a problem? Is there a problem with singing a song about bears while looking at bears?

It soon became time for lunch while we were walking around, so we decided to sit on a bench and have a light meal before we continued through the zoo.

“Tadah, it’s a packed lunch, Jjarro!”

“......”

I was wondering why she brought a bag.

With a confident look on her face, Saeyeon pulled out two packed lunches from her bag and spoke.

“Miss Jihye also told me that they were good, so it should definitely be tasty.”

“.....That sounds a bit trustworthy.”

“Right? I’ve always wanted to make you a packed lunch like this as well.”

Saeyeon laughed bashfully in response to my comment. I wasn’t particularly complimenting you right now. Well, whatever.

“What did Jihye say when you told her you were going out today?”

“She said to not worry about Jaim. Lately, Jaim has also been getting along better with Miss Jihye than before.”

“.....I figured.”

We did call them both over after what happened and had a talk with them, after all. We told them to not do things that would worry Saeyeon. Jaim seems to still be uncomfortable around Jihye, but at the very least, she was more open to her now compared to before.

Jihye decided to stay at our place for a while longer.

She did say that she wasn't going to go back if Jaim didn't return, and there was also the thing that I had said to her. She occasionally looked sad, but I pretended to not notice.

This was my choice, after all.

“Oh, this is definitely better than before.”

Once I voiced my awe after picking up one of the side dishes and eating it, Saeyeon giggled.

“Is it that good?”

“No, it's not super tasty or anything.”

It was just a bit better than before. At the very least, it wasn't a taste that made you repent while looking back at your life. I asked a question while I ate.

“Oh right, what did you talk about with Jihye last time?”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“You took Jihye back to your parents' place, didn't you? Did you not talk to her about something? Jihye told me that you said some stuff about me.”

“I didn't really say anything special.”

Saeyeon held her chopsticks in her mouth and spoke.

“I just told her that Jaim probably doesn't hate her as much as she thinks Jaim does, and, although you say some bad things from time to time, Jjaro, I told her that you aren't that bad of a person.”

“.....Is that really it?”

“Let’s leave it at that. There was also a secret topic that you don’t know about, but that’s a secret, so I won’t tell you. Like how you’re hiding something from me as well.”

“.....”

I sometimes wonder. Does Saeyeon actually know the truth already, or does she really not know? Nevertheless, I had no way to find out.

We resumed our walk around the zoo once we managed to finish our lunch.

There wasn’t anything particularly different this time, except for one thing.

“It’s a date, so we should go around holding hands, right?”

My hand which was holding hers during this heatwave was hot.

My hand felt moist because of the sweat, so I tried to wipe it off on my pants for a moment, but Saeyeon strengthened her grip instead. She shook her head. As if she even found this sensation to be pleasant.

We were at a distance where our shoulders were nearly touching. The wide brim of Saeyeon’s hat occasionally tickled my cheek, but whenever I tried to put some distance between us, Saeyeon would take a step towards me and bring us back to our original positions.

Saeyeon continued to smile as if she were happy.

Once we roamed around the zoo, which didn’t really have any particularly interesting exhibits, for a long time, the sun eventually started to set.

“Should we head home now?”

“Okay.”

Whether it was because we walked for a long period of time or because of the sunlight, but Saeyeon answered in a tired voice. I wasn’t the one who dragged her around. She’s the one who dragged me around.

“Are you having a hard time?”

“No. It’s okay. I’m the one who wanted to come here.”

Saeyeon shook her head. We were almost at the exit.

Thus, I let go of her hand. Saeyeon didn't seem to mind as she continued to walk forward.

I stood still as I caught my breath.

There's one thing I decided to do today.

No, in truth, I had decided to say this a long time ago.

However, I always missed the opportunity to do so. I wanted to say it, but I would always feel as if I shouldn't.

This was something that couldn't be helped now.

This might be something that Saeyeon had noticed by now as well.

But.....

Saeyeon didn't wait for me and continued forward. She was at a distance where I was unsure as to whether she could hear me or not if I were to speak now. Any later than this, and I may try to aim for another opportunity.

And like that, I would continue to be unable to say it. I felt like it was going to be like that for some reason.

That's why I had to do it. I have to. The words that I should have said back then, no, the words that I should have said several years ago.

“——Sorry.”

I have to apologize to Saeyeon.

For having twisted Saeyeon however I pleased.

For using Saeyeon's feelings until now.

For not trying to understand Saeyeon even once until now.

No, for everything that had happened between us until now.

“.....”

Saeyeon simply stood there in silence.

What kind of expression was Saeyeon making right now? Instead of the back

she was showing me, what sort of emotions were going through her front right now?

She most likely knows even if I don't tell her. What I'm apologizing for. The current Saeyeon isn't a child anymore, after all.

Was she upset? Was she sad? Because I had broken her until now, changed her however I pleased, and laughed at her as I treated her like an idiot.

".....I'm so, sorry."

I couldn't revert everything back to how it was, so I could only apologize.

I know how much of a piece of trash I am to a painful degree.

I also know that the most garbage-like part of me is the fact that I'm displaying this side of myself at a moment like this.

The side that's hoping that Saeyeon would smile and accept my arbitrary apology, the fact that I'm showing her how much of an unbearable a piece of trash I am, but at the same time, I couldn't do anything about it.

".....Jjaro."

With her back still facing me, Saeyeon simply raised her arm and pointed forward.

"Do you see that?"

"....."

"Don't be like that and come here. Can you see that?"

Her back was still facing me as she said that. I wordlessly went to Saeyeon's side and, while suppressing my urge to look at Saeyeon's face, I looked towards the place where Saeyeon was pointing at.

".....There's nothing there."

"Yup. There's nothing there."

In the end, I wound up turning towards Saeyeon. Even though I knew that it wouldn't make sense for me to get annoyed at a time like this.

Saeyeon was just smiling. Happily.

“Still, we were looking towards the same place, weren’t we?”

“.....You.....”

“That’s why that’s enough.”

Saeyeon turned around and showed her back to me once more before I could say anything.

“From now on, if Jjarō tries to apologize again for ‘what you had done back then’, then I could say something like ‘Something like that did happen, huh?’ and ‘Oh, right! We were looking towards the same place at that time, weren’t we?’.”

“.....I don’t understand what you mean.”

“That’s fine.”

Saeyeon took wide, exaggerated, and cheerful steps forward and spoke as she distanced herself from me.

“I was able to stay with you, Jjarō, by doing that, after all.”

“.....”

“Since we were able to look towards the same place, I’m fine with that.”

Saeyeon chuckled lightly and continued.

“Jjarō, you know what you did was wrong, right?”

“Sorry.”

“You won’t do that from now on, right?”

“Sorry.”

“I asked you if you weren’t going to do that from now on. It doesn’t make sense if you answer that with ‘Sorry’.”

“.....Sorry.”

Saeyeon giggled. The sound of her laughter tickled my ears.

Saeyeon stopped walking forward. I was barely able to hear her voice now.

“.....I sometimes think that we might not always be able to stay together.

Similar to how I want to see Mom.”

Saeyeon was speaking in a mature and regrettable voice which I had once heard her speak in before.

“But, I believe that you can’t do anything about what can’t be helped.”

With a slightly lonely and sad tone, Saeyeon spoke.

“That’s why, rather than regretting what happened and being angry at you, I want to enjoy the present.”

“Saeyeon.”

“I probably won’t be with you forever, Jjarro.”

“Saeyeon.”

“A lot of things will definitely happen from now on, and we may even get into a larger fight than the one we had before. I might even get tired of you and tell you that I want to break up. Even if these things don’t happen, you and I will grow old and once we both become grandparents, who knows who will die first. We aren’t capable of living forever, right?”

“Saeyeon.”

“So, Jjarro, you as well.”

Saeyeon spun around and reached her hand out as she looked at me.

“If possible, I want you to keep liking me like this.”

“.....”

“Later on, we might start to miss holding hands, walking together, and looking towards the same place together like this, right?”

While smiling gently, Saeyeon waved her extended hand slightly as if she were urging me to hurry up and grab her hand.

A thought went through my head as I grabbed that hand.

I decided.

From now on, no matter what happens, I won’t let go of this hand first.

If I have a family, if someone lives together with me like this forever, then

there's only one person in the world who can be my partner.

No, it isn't to that extent, but,

I'll continue to live while atoning for everything I've done until now.

I have no other choice but to take responsibility for what I had broken.

I wanted to take responsibility.

No one is forcing me to do this. I'm doing this because I want to.

Because, rather than being told that I'm needed or precious to someone, I need Saeyeon more.

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20XX-X-X

Please circle
today's weather.



I hope I can hold on to this hand forever. 

TL note: Thanks for reading this chapter. I honestly really like this chapter because you can tell how much Saeyeon has grown, but you're also still in a loop on whether Saeyeon actually knows the truth or not. She says something that makes you feel like she knows, but then she follows it by talking about how they can't be together forever for very common and obvious reasons like growing old and being the first one to die of old age. The volume could have probably ended at this chapter and it would have been completely fine, but there's another chapter left. I'm not complaining, though. More chapters the merrier.

In any case, like I said, I started going to university again this week, so my schedule is a bit weird. This week is the last week to switch classes around and maybe take some classes out, but all things considered, my current schedule isn't too bad. Translating at my university in an empty classroom is pretty relaxing. The next chapter is pretty short as well, so I'll get that out soon.

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Chapter 9

9. Peace

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“Hi, everyone!”

Monday. All of our classmates’ gazes turned towards us the instant Saeyeon slid the door open and greeted them energetically. So, well, I also turned my head and spoke.

“.....Hi.”

If you think about it, who even greets people in the morning? This is so embarrassing that I could die.

“......”

“.....What, is it that weird for me to greet you guys?”

I know I’m not the type of person who normally does this, but isn’t this reaction a bit too much? I shouldn’t have greeted them.

I felt my face heat up because everyone was staring at me blankly, however, that only lasted for a moment. Shortly after, I was even more startled because they started to applaud by ones and twos.

“W-What’s up with you guys all of a sudden?”

More importantly, these guys seriously like clapping too much. It seems our applauding classmates didn’t care about my reaction as they turned towards Saeyeon and grinned brightly.

“Congrats, Saeyeon!”

“For that Jaro, to finally start dating Saeyeon……!”

“As I thought, love wins over everything!”

Wait, what?

“H-How do you guys know about that?!”

“Ehehe, this is embarrassing…….”

Saeyeon scratched her cheek shyly. The kids sniffed and spoke as they rubbed the corners of their eyes in response to my shout.

“Well, Jaim told us everything. She told us that you two were going on a date last weekend and that we should pretend as if we didn’t know…….”

“Bells! Ring the bells! Is today not a great day?!”

That brat……! So this is why she said she wasn’t going to come to school today, isn’t it? I thought it was because she was still sulking.

Our classmates flocked around us like a bunch of birds while I was busy grinding my teeth.

“Saeyeon, where did Jaro take you? Huh?”

“We went to a zoo together!”

“A zoo, huh……? It does suit Saeyeon’s innocent image.”

“Wasn’t it a bit boring to go to a zoo for your first date?”

“No, don’t you think Jaro might also be the same as her? A pure, innocent boy?”

“I asked him to take me there. I wanted to see animals!”

“This is a complete surprise. I thought that if it’s Jaro, then he would have just dragged Saeyeon around however he pleased, but for him to obediently follow

along to where Saeyeon wanted to go…….”

“Jaro is that, isn’t he? A tsundere? At this rate, he’s going to end up becoming a devoted father.”

“S-Shut up! It’s not like that!”

Once I shouted at the kids who were talking unreservedly, Saeyeon, who at one point had linked her arm with mine and was smiling happily, lowered her brows.

“……It wasn’t?”

“N-No, it was a date and we did go there because you wanted to, but…….”

“…….”

“Can you guys stop smiling like that?!”

Stop looking at me with hen-like eyes as if I’m some sort of baby chick! Stop smiling at me all nice and warm! Stop patting my shoulder! Which one of you guys poked my cheek just now?!

“Oh, this is a rare sight.”

I simply ground my teeth as I watched as Saeyeon happily answered the questions of our classmates who kept asking her about what happened yesterday. It was then that I heard a voice behind me.

“Nanda, please tell me you didn’t have any part in this situation as well.”

I asked just in case, but Nanda grinned brightly.

“I bought a cake and some firecrackers, but did you guys not need them?”

“We don’t!”

“Wow, a cake! Are you giving that to us, Nanda?”

“I bought it in order to celebrate, but Jjaro said you guys don’t need it, so…….”

“…….”

He was using Saeyeon as a weapon, this wicked bastard…….

After declaring that she was going to eat it with everyone, Saeyeon went to

her desk and opened the small cake box that Nanda had gifted to us. Hey, my share should be in there as well, but why are you eating everything? However, before I could let out that complaint, I noticed Nanda's pleasant grin, so I wound up holding my tongue.

".....What?"

"No, it's just that the day you and Saeyeon went on a date finally arrived. I knew this would eventually happen, but it's really surprising."

".....Shut up."

Why are you smiling so cheerfully?

"I feel a bit happy and sad, but since Saeyeon is happy, it's not a bad feeling."

".....About that."

Once I called out to him hesitantly, Nanda, who was watching Saeyeon with a cheerful look on his face, turned towards me.

".....That thing I said a while back..... I take it back."

Nanda gave me a weird look for a moment, but it seems he understood what I was talking about as he opened his eyes wide. I felt my face getting hot, so I scratched the back of my head.

"All right. I figured this would happen."

He looked disappointed for a moment, but his grin quickly returned.

"More importantly, Saeyeon, can I have a slice as well? I didn't have a proper breakfast this morning."

"Oh right. Why are you eating everything, Saeyeon? Give me..... It's all gone!"

In an attempt to change the topic, Nanda turned towards Saeyeon and asked that, so I followed suit as well, but once I did, the cake box was already completely empty. 6 of our classmates and Saeyeon all turned to look at us with plastic forks in their mouths.

"U-Uhm..... I-It was really delicious....."

".....You bread addict."

“I-I’m not the bad one! The cake is!”

While pouting her cheeks, which were filled with cake, Saeyeon got upset instead. Right, what can I say to this girl? I let out a small sigh and tapped Nanda’s shoulder as he was staring at the empty box with a disappointed look on his face.

“Let’s go eat some bread, friend. There’s still some time left.”

“That’s embarrassing, man. But if you’re buying, Jjaro.”

I bumped fists with Nanda.

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I've thought this before, but I really don't think this drama should be broadcasted during this time of the day.

——Aren't you being too careless just because you're the head of the household? Your wife and I already have a perfect subordinate and superior affectionate relationship!

——Return her! Return all of the monthly wages I've given you until now as well!

……The drama that Saeyeon likes, 'The Counterattacking Missus', had entered into a new arc. I heard that they received quite the number of views for some reason, so they continued the series. I wonder if it's okay for them to do this.

The wife, who had joined hands with the 3rd son of a large company and dreamt of getting revenge on her husband, was finally able to crush her husband's business after working excruciatingly hard, but unsurprisingly, the wife turned out to be the step-sister of the 3rd son as she was a daughter whom the CEO of the major company had been keeping under wraps. Oh, how surprising. The ex-girlfriend of the 3rd son approached the wife's husband in order to get the wife away from the 3rd son, and the 3rd son got tired of the wife despite the fact that he kept saying that he couldn't live without her during the 1st season a lot, and started to fool around with a newly introduced housewife……. Well, this was the gist of it.

“Mm……. As I thought, it would be best if she worked it out with her husband…….”

“More importantly, that 3rd son is pretty ridiculous. Even if he likes that housewife, he kept saying he couldn't live without the wife before.”

“No, the housewife is definitely flirting with him. Later on, it’ll probably be revealed that the husband or the ex-girlfriend made her do that.”

“Well, it’s an obvious development, but that’s probably what will happen. Ah, Saeyeon, pass me some chips as well. My mouth is getting bored.”

Albeit, I’ve also been getting interested in the show recently.

The sound of crunching resounded underneath the sound coming from the TV.

Saeyeon and Jihye were sitting on the couch and watching the drama while eating chips. There were no more seats, so Jaim and I were lazily sitting on the ground and watching as well.

Recently, we’ve become completely used to gathering around this time of the day and having a discussion about the drama.

“Still, I think it would be better if the wife won. You think so as well, right, Jjaro?”

“But don’t you think it’s a man’s dream to be drawn in by a young and pretty housewife? What do you think, Master?”

“Jihye, can you stop saying weird things to Dad?”

……Although it’s a bit weird when this happens every single time. Why do they play this drama at this time of the day? It’s not good for the kids.

Well, if you think about it from a different perspective, then the fact that Jihye’s able to joke around like this in front of Jaim and Jaim’s also able to receive these jokes like this means they’ve gotten closer, right? I decided to interpret it like this.

“It’s all right, Jaim. I told you, didn’t I? Miss Jihye is your second mom.”

“No, I don’t feel like that’s something you should be saying in this situation.”

Saeyeon giggled at my rebuttal and spoke.

“Also, Mom told me something good.”

“……Your mom?”

I don’t know what she told her, but I feel like it’s not going to be a good thing

for me. Saeyeon continued while I was eyeing her suspiciously.

“She said that there’s a thing called concubines in the world!”

“.....”

I figured. I knew that old lady would say something like that. After I grasped my aching head and lowered it, I heard Jaim’s voice.

“M-Mom, do you know what that means?”

“Yup! Mom explained it to me. If you already have one mom present, then that’s what you call your second mom, right? She said that they do the housework together, like their husband together, and act like a family!”

“.....”

“Why are you looking at me like that? Go complain to Saeyeon’s mom!”

Once I shouted that at Jaim, who was staring at me quite vigorously, no, glaring at me, both Saeyeon and Jihye giggled. Seriously, it’s a bizarre sight when they both laugh together since they resemble each other so much.

“More importantly, when’s the chicken getting here……? I’m getting hungry…….”

Saeyeon rubbed her stomach and looked at the clock which resulted in that conversation ending there. Now that I think about, they should’ve arrived by now, but they still haven’t. We originally planned to eat while watching the drama.

That’s right. Tonight’s dinner is fried chicken. My royalties finally came in, after all. Our household finances have become a bit better. Going out to eat is still impossible, but I can at least provide this much.

“……Instead of ordering some fried chicken, I could have made some myself.”

In contrast to Saeyeon and Jaim, who were happy about being able to eat fried chicken again after a long while, Jihye seemed to be sulking a bit.

“As a robot maid who specializes in housework, I believe that it’s wrong to order food that I can already make here at home!”

“Don’t fry chicken here. Cleaning up the aftermath is a pain.”

Cooking it takes effort, it uses up a lot of cooking oil, it's difficult to figure out where to throw out the remaining oil, it's hard to find a plate or frying pan that's large enough to fry them on, and most importantly, it won't fry that crisply with the firepower we have here at home. That's why places that do it professionally are important.

"But taking care of the aftermath and other problems is another way to display the capabilities of a robot maid."

Don't say something like that while sticking out your chest. The robot maid I dreamed of wasn't like that.

"Now that I think about it, Saeyeon, stop eating chips. Dinner is going to arrive soon and those chips are going to make you lose your appetite. You'll also gain weight."

She's been continuously moving chips to her mouth, so it's been bothering me. Once I pointed that out, Saeyeon proudly ate another chip and spoke.

"But I'm the type of person who doesn't get fat."

"This may not matter, but I don't get fat even if I consume things."

"Uuh....."

.....Why are you the one staring at Saeyeon and Jihye with a betrayed look on your face, kid? Jaim stared at the chip she was holding in her hand with a strangely sad look on her face before muttering something.

".....I won't have dinner."

"Why are you worrying about your weight already? It's fine. I heard that it goes to your height as you grow up."

"But....."

Jaim lowered the chip as if she found my remark to be doubtful. Personally, if she had a little more fat, then pulling on her cheeks would feel even better. Moreover.....

I spoke in a small voice so that Saeyeon and Jihye couldn't hear me.

".....I'm doing this as an apology as well, so just eat some chicken when it

comes.”

“Apology? Ah…….”

Jaim’s mouth absent-mindedly fell agape in response to my words. Don’t be like that. You’re making this more embarrassing than it should be. I was about to scratch the back of my head, but I awkwardly lowered it and spoke.

“You did say you’d forgive me last time, but it’s still my fault. I don’t intend to save face by buying fried chicken, but think of it as my sincerity.”

“It’s fine. About last time……. I’m also, sort of sorry, about what happened.”

“You’re sorry? What for?”

“Because I acted like a child.”

Jaim spoke while scratching her slightly reddened cheek.

“……Naturally, I got super mad when I heard you say that, but the next day, I wasn’t as mad anymore. Mom also said those things to me. Still……. I wanted to throw a tantrum at you. And when you said you needed me, that also made me happy.”

“……Sorry.”

A while back, I had told her that I never wanted her.

Jaim looked as if she were contemplating something once I apologized.

“Well, I haven’t completely accepted it yet. I still can’t look at Jihye like the way Mom told me to, and I have no idea if the you in the future likes me or not, but…….”

“That’s…….”

“Still, is there anything more that needs to be said between a family?”

Jaim grinned brightly as she said that.

“‘It’s my fault’, and ‘it’s okay’. These words are good enough.”

“……As I thought, the answer I chose back then was wrong.”

“Did you start feeling like it’d be okay to have a cute daughter?”

“It’d be great if you didn’t try to climb to the very top just because I

complimented you once.”

“I’m like you when it comes to saying a line too much~.”

Jeez, she always has to have the last word. I simply chuckled.

“What kind of secret talk are you two having so happily?”

Saeyeon heard my laughter and turned towards me with a smile. All right, then.

“Jaim was telling me that she wasn’t going to have any of the chicken. She said she’d get fat.”

“N-No, I didn’t! I’m going to eat! Mom, don’t believe Dad!”

“It’s fine, Miss. This top-notch robot maid also has a Weight Management Program downloaded. I see that the day where the Miss starts worrying about her weight has finally arrived, huh…….”

“I told you that’s not it!”

Ding dong——.

“Your chicken is here!”

“Oh, they’re here.”

“I’ll be right there~! Jjaro, the money!”

“The cola can is mine! The drumsticks as well!”

“May I also have a piece?”

“Here’s the money……. What a discourteous kid! You were going on about not eating a second ago! It’s only natural for the head of the household, who supports this home, to eat the legs!”

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20XX June XX Periodical report 中

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“That’s correct. Yes. There are no problems to speak of. I believe that both Mr. Jin Jaro and Miss Ja Saeyeon have not noticed **that far**. No. Not only that, but the other things as well.

Yes. You also don’t have to worry about the issue involving Miss Jin Jaim and ‘Eureka’. I’m paying attention to both of them and keeping an eye on them as well.

Except……. No. It’s nothing.

Even if you tell me to tell you……. Well. I’m not sure if I should say it. No, it’s not because I’m afraid of writing a written apology. I told you that’s not it. Yes. I understand. Then I’ll say it.

I sometimes feel like I’m not suited for this mission. I understand that this is a mission that only I can carry out, but I feel like I’m gradually growing attached to them as I continue to observe them. Also…….

I also feel a bit **sorry**……. It, hurts me.

……No. Yes. I’m aware. Yes. You don’t have to worry. It’s just that I feel like that a tiny bit. I endured my training as an agent for **this goal**, after all. You don’t have to be concerned.

I think he’s here. Today is the day, after all.

Then, if you’ll excuse me first.”

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TL note: Thanks for reading the chapter. Finally, We’ve reached the end of volume 2, sort of. See, this wasn’t a bad way to end the volume either, was it? The previous chapter is good as well, but this is also fine. Got to end it as a whole family, right?

In any case, the last few things after this chapter will be out very soon, so you won’t have to wait too long. I might end up doing a bulk release, but who knows. I’m writing this immediately after finishing this chapter, so I don’t know how it’ll end up. If it is a bulk release, then feel free to ignore this.

I’ll see you guys at the end of the volume,

We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Author’s Afterword

Author’s Afterword

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Before getting into the actual afterword, I must first tell you all some unbelievable news. I’m not sure if some of you have already heard, but this story (Not an ‘Eagle’), ‘We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!’, is going to receive an animated version! Yahoo! Uhehe! Oh yeah!
(TL note: The phrase ‘this story’ can phonetically be read as the English word ‘eagle’ in Korean.)

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I live while constantly thinking how good it would be if this were true. An author who woke up in the middle of a winter night was crying. After having witnessed this, the editor thought it was strange, so he questioned the author. Did you have a bad dream? No. Did you have a sad dream? No, I had a sweet dream. Then why are you crying so sadly? The author wiped away his flowing tears and spoke in a low voice. Because the dream will never come true…….

Hello. It's everyone's friend, our friend, the lazy Ryu Hosung. Are you all healthy? This volume 2 has begun its release in various meanings. I'm not sure if you had an enjoyable time reading it.

I think I'll start with a slightly personal story.

It's been 3 months since volume 1 was released. I was pleased with my first book which had my name on it. Since a long time ago, I liked my writing and I would turn the pages wanting to quickly see the next part of my writing. Fortunately, a lot of people have also been enjoying it.

However, once volume 1 of 『We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!』 was released, there were a lot of people who left favorable reviews, but there were also a lot of people who left unfavorable reviews. Because the unexpected negative reviews hurt me quite a lot, I ended up wandering for a fair bit.

Nevertheless, I decided to believe that those negative reviews were telling me to become better. With everyone's interest and berating as my motivation, I'm going to work hard to give everyone an even better story. If you read this 2nd volume and then the afterword, or perhaps, read the afterword before the story, and you thought 'Ah, this has developed more than the first volume. It's more interesting.', then I can't wish for anything more. I simply dream that you all have an enjoyable time reading and I turn the page today as well.

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Now then, I'll quickly get to the words of thanks.

I'm going to change the order a bit this time and give my regards to my editor first. Thank you for taking control of me properly when I was wandering around for a long time and unable to make any progress with my manuscript. I was really afraid of what you told me back then. I'll make sure to keep to the deadline next time. I won't be canned. I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I won't run away. I'll write the manuscript sincerely. Spare me. It's my fault. Mommy, save me. Mom. Mooom——!

Next, the great Yoo Nameul. Yoo Nameul is a God. Each time I receive an illustration, my devotion gradually becomes bigger. I think I can become a religious sect leader soon. Furthermore, I'm sorry. Because of me, a labored schedule was forced upon you! This is the state you were most likely put in. Despite that, thank you for drawing these illustrations that raise the value of my devotion. I'll do my best from now on. Don't throw me away. Next time, I'll come to visit you after buying a gift.

Other than these two, I'm thankful to everyone that I've become beholden to. I wanted to display a miraculous thanking method to everyone I've become indebted to like I said last time, but as I thought, there aren't enough empty pages. Will I be able to write it all one day?

Following after, a word of thanks to my parents. I'll work even harder from now on, but I think you guys can stop advertising my book to our relatives. No, can you please stop? Naturally, I'm thankful that you're proud of my book, and I'm also proud of it as well, but still, that's a bit…….

Finally, I already wrote this on the side of the book as well, but I'd like to thank my girlfriend and my father-in-law. Next March, my beloved Miss Rinko

Kobayakawa will return, so I wish to become a boyfriend that isn't embarrassing.

It'd be great if you enjoyed reading. I'll see you all in the next volume. Yours truly!

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We Should Have Slept While Only Holding Hands, And Yet?!: Volume 2 – Truth

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“Ah, welcome, Underclassman Jin Jaro.”

Like last time, I could see the exterior of the school where the sun was setting through the open window. I couldn't see the sky because of the apartment buildings. The amber rays alone entered the clubroom. The blowing wind made the curtains flutter.

“It was a bit suffocating since we always kept the curtains closed. You've been visiting a lot more frequent lately, I see? You stopped coming that often once you started living together with more people.”

While receiving the glow of the setting sun, which was coming in through the window, on her back, Upperclassman Nabom gently waved her hand.

School had already ended a long time ago. There weren't any students left at school right now since our school had adjusted to recent times and gotten rid of the late-night self-study classes. Upperclassman Nabom and I were most likely the only students here at the moment.

“Well, you're here by yourself because of me, so I feel sorry about that as well.”

“You don't have to worry that much. In my own way, I don't dislike being here. Especially recently.”

Upperclassman Nabom gathered her hair together since it was fluttering in the wind and looked out the window even though she could most likely only see the walls of the apartment buildings.

When she said she didn't dislike being here, did she mean this clubroom, or.....

"But there's another reason today."

"What is it, Underclassman Jin Jaro? You have such a serious look on your face."

"There's something I've been wondering about."

Once she heard those words, Upperclassman Nabom let out a small sigh, uncrossed her legs, and fixed her posture.

".....All right. I see you've finally made up your mind."

"It's my fault for not trying to know until now."

I gave her a small nod and stood by the door while maintaining eye contact. I was basically telling her that I won't let her leave until I get an answer.

"No matter how much I think about it, your words were weird, Upperclassman Nabom."

"What was weird?Would you get upset if I asked that?"

Upperclassman Nabom simply laughed as if she were troubled. However, that expression didn't look as if she were teasing me this time. There was probably a different meaning.

So, instead of getting upset, I explained it to her as she wanted.

"You told me before that **there are no time paradoxes**. So I also believed that the future wouldn't change."

"It is exactly as you said."

"But that's weird."

"What about that is weird?"

Upperclassman Nabom's gaze looked as if she were doing her best to pretend

as if she didn't know what I was talking about. Therefore, I answered her.

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"Then that means Jaim came back to the past from the very beginning."

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".....What do you mean by that?"

"You can stop pretending as if you don't know."

I was starting to get annoyed by that reaction.

I hated Saeyeon. That's why I made it so that she didn't know anything.

Due to that, I ended up having a fight with her after Jaim was born and she left.

Because she didn't have a mom and also didn't want to deal with her dad who treated her coldly, Jaim traveled back in time.

As a result, I ended up fighting with Saeyeon now and we've spent our time like this ever since.

And, although I don't know why, I'll one day get into a fight with Saeyeon again for the same exact reason. **Because the future won't change.**

But that's strange.

"If, as you said, there really aren't any time paradoxes and the future won't change, then the **future where Jaim comes to the past** won't change either."

I was able to obtain the family that I've been yearning this long for. I don't understand how, after having achieved this, I could break up with Saeyeon and treat Jaim coldly, but if these things actually do happen, then Jaim will go to the past.

As a result of that, Saeyeon and I fight for the same reason we fight in the future, and endeavor to make Jaim stay in this time, again, and again.....

"There is no start."

The fight with Saeyeon that happens in the future that Jaim told me about doesn't happen.

“And there’s no end.”

If the future doesn’t change, then this loop will be eternal.

“If I want to understand this, then one question needs to be answered.”

And the only one who knows the answer to this question is this person.

I stared right at Upperclassman Nabom and asked.

“So please answer me. **Why do I break up with Saeyeon?**”

“.....”

“Please don’t give me a rough answer like, ‘You broke up with Saeyeon because you didn’t see her as a girl’. I know that’s a lie.”

Upperclassman Nabom didn’t answer. There was a moment of silence.

Clap, clap, clap. Upperclassman Nabom started to applaud slowly without any energy.

“You figured it out well, huh?”

Only the sound of slow applause filled the clubroom.

“I knew very well that Underclassman Jin Jaro would **ask me that at this point**, but I’m honestly surprised. I believed that you were a person who didn’t really think about things.”

.....As I expected, she knew.

“But at the same time, I’m also disappointed. Several times now, I’m certain that I’ve told you that I’m not your ally, Underclassman Jin Jaro. It seems you truly, truly didn’t listen to even a single one of my advice.”

An indescribable smile appeared on Upperclassman Nabom’s face as she spoke.

“You understand there’s no reason for me to answer that question, correct?”

“I still have to know.”

“It’s not my duty to play along with Underclassman Jin Jaro that far.”

“I still have to know.”

“Why is that?”

“Because I’m the head of the household.”

“.....”

“Because I have to protect Saeyeon and Jaim.”

“.....I see you’re going to take it that far.”

Upperclassman Nabom paused because of my answer. She let out a sigh.

“Very well. If you’re going to go that far, then at the very least, I will be your ally for this moment.”

Upperclassman Nabom smiled bitterly.

“That’s why I’m going to convince you to give up, Underclassman Jin Jaro.”

“.....Why?”

“I’ll give you a simple explanation about how time works.”

As if she were trying to change the topic, Upperclassman Nabom smiled slightly.

“For example, let’s say that there’s a certain story. It could also be a movie, but a lot of people had already read the story. Naturally, a lot of people also know the ending. Now let’s say that in that situation, you read the story, but you didn’t like the ending, so you tore it out and wrote a different ending yourself.”

“.....”

Since she told me she’ll be my ally right now, she probably won’t lie to me. She’s that type of person, after all.

“Does that mean the ending had changed just because you did that?”

“In other words, Upperclassman Nabom, you’re saying that as long as you and Jaim, the people who know the future, are here, the future won’t change. Is that it?”

“To put it in another way, if Miss Jaim and I return to the future, then the future will not have been determined yet.”

Upperclassman Nabom answered while staring straight at me.

“This is just to a certain extent. I don’t know if it will actually change or not simply because we go back. However…….”

“If I know what happens, then, in the end, it won’t change. That’s why you can’t tell me. Is this what you’re trying to tell me?”

“Because at least at this moment, I’m your ally, Underclassman Jin Jaro.”

As if she were telling me that she wasn’t lying, she spoke as if she were trying to convince me that this was for my sake.

This was most likely the branch in the path.

If we one day make Jaim go back to the future and Upperclassman Nabom and Jihye go as well, then the future will be unknown.

But…….

“I don’t believe that the future is set in stone.”

“…….”

“That sort of defeatist way of thinking doesn’t suit me.”

Even if a future where I achieve my dream is waiting for me, I’ll refuse any future that I don’t want. If I can’t change it, then I’ll do whatever I can to change it. That’s the way I do things.”

“And a premise is required to do what you said, Upperclassman Nabom.”

“What sort of premise are you talking about?”

“The premise of me sending Jaim back to the future.”

Since she said there can’t be someone who knows the future.

“But I don’t plan on doing that. I can’t send her back to a future she doesn’t want when it isn’t certain. I’m her dad, after all.”

Above all else, there was a contradiction in what Upperclassman Nabom had said.

“If there can’t be someone who knows the future, then since I know that I’m going to break up with Saeyeon, then you have to do something about me as

well, right?”

“.....I see. It would indeed become like that.”

Upperclassman Nabom nodded her head seriously and continued.

“However, in that regard, I could simply go out of my way to alter your memories. If I erase the memories you have about the future, then Underclassman Jin Jaro, you will also.....”

“I won’t let you.”

If you do that, then I’ll forget that Jaim was here, that I’m going to break up with Saeyeon in the future, and what sort of person I’m going to become in the future.

“.....We’ll definitely arrive at that same future again.”

In the end, it’s simple.

“.....I see.”

And in response to my answer, Upperclassman Nabom’s face became stiff for some reason.

“.....So you’re saying there’s no choice.”

Upperclassman Nabom spoke with a somewhat strange voice and smile on her face.

“So is that why that happened?”

I didn’t miss what she mumbled under her breath.

“More important than anything else, I’m going to protect Saeyeon and Jaim. I have to protect them.”

No matter what happens, that’s something I can’t make adjustments for.

“And I’ll do whatever I can to accomplish that.”

We’re going to break up in the future? Who decided that?

I don’t lack enough greed to give up on the things that I’ve obtained.

“No matter what happens in the future, even if you tell me that it can’t be changed, I’ll do whatever I can to change it. I can solve it. I can overcome it. So

tell me what happens.”

If I know the reason why I break up with Saeyeon, then I should be able to do something to change it. If I know the reason, then I can avoid it.

“I’ll ignore the fact that there are no time paradoxes, that you can’t change the future. I’ll change the future myself.”

I pounded my chest and decided to act like I used to for at least this moment.

“I’m the greatest scientist of this era, The Mad Scientist Jin Jaro.”

“……If you’re going to take it that far, then it can’t be helped.”

Upperclassman Nabom shook her head weakly and gazed at me.

“I did say that I will at least be your ally at this moment, so if you truly want to know, then I have to oblige.”

With a somewhat worried glint in her eyes,

“Even if it’s something that I want to hide from you, Underclassman Jin Jaro, as your ally. If you wish to know that badly, then.”

As if confirming it with me for one last time, Upperclassman Ha Nabom asked me seriously.

“Underclassman Jin Jaro, once you hear this, you will undoubtedly regret it for a very long time. Still, is this truly……. Is this truly okay?”

“I won’t regret it. I’ll take care of it no matter what happens.”

“……You’re going to regret saying that line the most.”

After saying those final, barely audible words,

Upperclassman Nabom let out a sigh as if she were letting out all the air from her lungs, and raised her head in order to stare right at me.

With an incredibly sad, rueful, and mournful look on her face,

Upperclassman Nabom spoke.

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“——2 years from now, Miss Ja Saeyeon will die.”

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〈Volume 2 End〉

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TL note: Thanks for reading this ‘extra’ chapter. This is the actual end of the volume, not chapter 9. Quite the cliffhanger. I really don’t have anything much to say at this point. I’ll either make an update post after this or just immediately go into translating volume 3, but before that, I have to get accustomed to my university life again. It isn’t as bad as I thought it would be, but it does consume a lot of my time now, so my translating speed will go down. I’ll try my best to somehow maintain a stable pace.

In any case, I’ll see you guys in the next update.